

# *Japanese Influence, Northwest Landscape Design*

## *Washington Park Arboretum Bulletin*

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The Arboretum Foundation:

(206) 325-4510 FAX: 325-8893

e-mail: gvc@arboretumfoundation.org

Bulletin Advertising: (360) 297-3887

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## Where in the Arboretum?

Cover: *Acer palmatum* 'Shikageori Nishiki'



Photo by Joy Spurr

Washington Park's Japanese Garden is the home to *Acer palmatum* 'Shikageori Nishiki', which is very rare in North America. Above, it is in May leaf, and in fall the leaves are shades of brown and red. Washington Park Arboretum has one of the top maple collections in North America.

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The Arboretum Foundation is a nonprofit organization that was chartered to further Washington Park Arboretum development, projects, and programs through volunteer service and fund raising. Its mission is to ensure stewardship for the Washington Park Arboretum, a Pacific Northwest treasure, and to provide horticultural leadership for the region. This stewardship requires effective leadership, stable funding, and broad public support.

Washington Park Arboretum (WPA) is administered cooperatively between the University of Washington, its Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH), and the City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation. The programs and plant collections are a responsibility of CUH.

WPA is a living plant museum emphasizing trees and shrubs hardy in the maritime Pacific Northwest. Plant collections are selected and arranged to display their beauty and function in urban landscapes, to demonstrate their natural ecology and diversity, and to conserve important species and cultivated varieties for the future. The Arboretum serves the public, students at all levels, naturalists, gardeners, and nursery and landscape professionals with its collections, educational programs, interpretation, and recreational opportunities.



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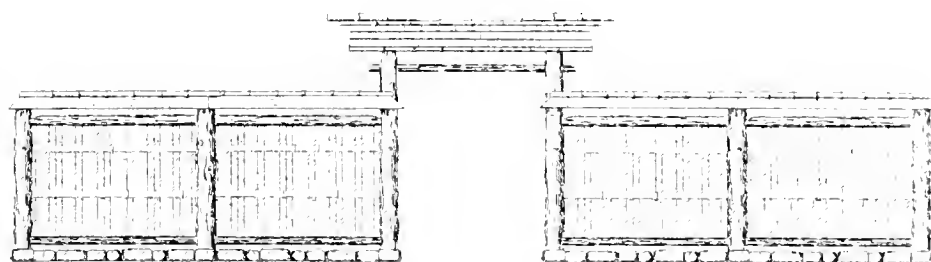
This *Bulletin* was inspired by the lecture series, "Japanese Elements in Pacific Northwest Landscape Design," which was presented in 1996 by the Japanese Garden Society in cooperation with the Consulate-General of Japan, Seattle Art Museum, the Urasenke Foundation, University of Washington, and The Arboretum Foundation.



The montane forest of Chichibu, Japan, consists of *Tsuga sieboldii* (hemlock) and *Abies firma* (Momi fir, in background). This forest is also a source of some of Washington Park Arboretum's trees and shrubs. For more information about *A. firma* (page 13) and other arboretum plants, growing tips, and programs, look for the maple leaf near *Bulletin* articles.



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*Cedar and bamboo poles form the Tori gate  
at a Catholic monastery, page 32.*



ABOVE: *The Kuni Mukai Garden, Vashon Island, Washington. Mrs. Mukai favored brightly colored plants popular in the United States during the 1920s (Masa Mukai photo).*  
 OPPOSITE: *Shakkei on the Mountainside, Kubota Gardens, Seattle (David Streatfield photo).*

## The Resonance of Japan *in* Pacific Northwest Gardens

BY DAVID STREATFIELD

Japan's garden tradition has been widely admired ever since the country was opened to the West. Japanese gardens are exquisite abstractions of nature, designed both to aid contemplation of humankind's place in the cosmic order and to establish a relationship with the forces of nature, as well as to provide aesthetic pleasure.

In the beginning, Western appreciation of Japan's gardens was largely aesthetic. Clay Lancaster showed in his comprehensive book, *The Japanese Influence in America* (1963), how Americans literally absorbed Japanese themes into architecture, the decorative arts, and garden design. He emphasized that gardens and architecture on the West Coast were more strongly influenced by Japan than were any of the other regions.

Lancaster claimed that the national popularity of Andrew Jackson Downing's landscape style laid the groundwork for the popularity of Japanaiserie in America. Whatever the truth of this claim, the first Japanese garden in America was created at the Centennial International Exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876. Its popularity led to a series of Japanese gardens in many subsequent expositions, such as the garden at the Columbia Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. The first Japanese garden on the West Coast was created at the Mid-Winter Fair of 1894 held in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, to boost California trade and to promote the state's unusual climate.

Several factors account for the West Coast's attraction to Japanese gardens and their design principles. To begin with, a large population of Japanese-Americans have provided direct links with Japanese culture and gardening traditions. Many of these Japanese-Americans became gardeners. Others provided broad exposure to Japanese arts. In addition, geography was important, especially in the landscape. Like the Pacific Northwest, Japan has snowcapped mountains, towering forests, and dramatic water views. Indeed, comparisons of Mount Fuji and Mount Rainier are common.

Four modes of relating to Japanese garden traditions have been used in the Northwest. The most common has been to use Japanese artifacts to evoke the Japanese garden. An example is the Japanese garden at Villa Carman, in Tacoma, Washington (1918), where a Japanese gardener supervised the installation of imported stones, a stone lantern, and plants from Japan. This garden's eclectic meaning

is emphasized by the fact that it was neighbored by a Spanish garden. Other modes of relating to Japan fused design and cultural traditions and materials of Japan with those of the Northwest.

### **Fusion of Japan and America**

The experience of Japanese immigrant gardeners in America was very different from that of native-born designers, who mined the Japanese design vocabulary. Frequently subjected to severe racial discrimination, only rarely were they given an opportunity to design gardens that celebrated Japanese culture. Some accommodation to American cultural traditions appears to have been given.

*Kubota Gardens.* Fujitaro Kubota (1881–1972), a Seattle nurseryman, was significant because he attempted to mesh Japanese garden design principles and forms with American living patterns, regional characteristics, and, particularly, Northwest plants (Robinson 1992).

Kubota was born on Shikoku Island in Cochi Prefecture, Japan, the eldest son of a prosperous family of rice farmers. According to tradition, he would have inherited the family's farm, so his studies at a local agricultural school should have prepared him well for this role. Instead, he used his keen and sensitive understanding of plants and soils to become a garden designer.

At an early age, Kubota studied the temples and gardens of his native region. He was evidently greatly influenced by Ritsurin Park in the city of Takamatsu, the most famous traditional garden on Shikoku Island and an outstanding example of a stroll garden. Developed about 360 years ago by Takatoshi Ikoma, Ritsurin Park was retained as a private villa by the Matsuirai family until 1867 when it was overturned by the ruling samurai class. Its planting, rock arrangements, and spacious landscape characteristics are remarkably similar to those in the gardens that Kubota eventually created in Seattle.

As an independent spirit, Kubota decided to forsake the security of his family's farm to embark on an uncertain future in the United States. He settled in Seattle where he eventually established a landscape maintenance business in 1923. This was sufficiently successful that in 1929 he purchased five acres for a nursery demonstration garden in the Rainier Beach section of south Seattle.

Henceforth, Kubota combined a nursery and garden design practice with great success. Indeed, Kubota Gardens is one of his most important designs. The Spring Pond Garden, created in 1931, was the first improvement. It was surrounded by a clipped hedge; the pond, the bridge, an island, and a





stone lantern helped make this garden follow traditional patterns. One of the small bridges is a concrete replica of a dobashi (earthen bridge), extremely common in gardens such as Ritsurin Park and Katsura Imperial Villa.

Kubota's designs deliberately synthesized American and Japanese ideas. This merging of cultures incorporated the Japanese tradition of using local plants, including materials and construction techniques, to create an appropriate atmosphere. For example, in the mild climate of Takamatsu, palm trees, bamboos, pines, and deciduous trees flourish together with pampas and other ornamental grasses, sumacs, and lotuses. These unusual plant associations appear to have inspired Kubota to experiment with Seattle's broad range of plants. Although Kubota's ideas about planting apparently were influenced by Ritsurin Park, subsequent developments in his garden were more inventive and less derivative.

Kubota Gardens also reflects the Japanese desire to meet specific needs of the garden patron and owner. In this respect, Kubota's garden is possibly unique in being a drive-through garden. A graceful curving road through the flat area outside the Spring Pond Garden served as an automobile stroll garden, providing comfortable access for potential clients as well as to visitors who came for pleasure. While some might view the intrusion of the automobile into a garden that represents nature as being almost blasphemous, Kubota clearly recognized the importance of the automobile in American society. For him, the circulation of Cadillacs through his garden was not unlike the elaborate royal boats that floated through the pleasure gardens of the Heian period.

Kubota's garden served as an important meeting place for the local Japanese-American community. He frequently opened it for events such as weddings, graduations, and community celebrations, and this tradition continues. Kubota also employed the Japanese tradition of reusing old elements such as stones and lanterns from ruined temple gardens. He recycled a number of old elements from demolished or abandoned sites, including the King County Courthouse and the Broadway High School. Plants came from a variety of sources, though most were grown in his nursery and then transferred to the garden. Often, however, trees were moved from other sites (Robinson 1992).

This garden reached its peak of popularity and maintenance perfection just prior to World War

II. The garden was not maintained during the war; weeds 4 feet high filled the lawns, the ponds silted up, and many of the trees, dependent on meticulous pruning, became grossly distorted.

Yet, in another remarkable parallel with old Japanese gardens, these years of decline permanently imprinted the garden. Like the famous moss garden at Saihoji, which resulted from a long period of neglect during the Onin Wars, unusual serendipitous associations of plants in the central part of Kubota Gardens resulted from the war-time neglect.

Kubota refurbished his garden after the war, as time and money permitted. The garden was expanded and new areas were developed, but it never regained its prewar splendor. The last major construction was the Mountainside, completed in the early 1960s as a background to the flat central section. It was developed in the manner of Japanese-style hillside gardens; 400 tons of rock were moved in to create a 100-foot waterfall and an elaborate series of winding paths. Kubota used the stones naturalistically to create asymmetrical compositions that evoked the character of the local Cascade mountains. The view from the top of the hill is a classic example of shakkei (borrowed scenery). One of Kubota's most ambitious works, the Mountainside is distinctively regional in its use of Northwest plants, with a range of textures and colors quite different from those of traditional Japanese gardens.

*The Pries-Lea Garden.* Much of Kubota's design practice was residential. The Pries-Lea Garden (1958) was developed in close collaboration with Professor Lionel Pries, a distinguished professor of architecture at the University of Washington, who had traveled extensively in Japan and was an avid collector of Japanese and other Asian art. The landscape design is notable for its strong integration of architecture and garden (Robinson 1992).

The principal garden, a flat sand garden at the entrance to the house, is overlooked by large windows from the living room and reached by a colonnaded gallery with gnarled tree trunk columns. From the entry gate, the eye relates the horizontal ground plane of the garden to the distant horizontal plane of Lake Washington through two sets of windows. This is a most effective use of shakkei, reminiscent of Japanese tea gardens. The raked sand in the garden

foreground abstractly represents water, while being visually connected to a large body of real water.

Following tradition, the stones are arranged in the raked gravel in odd-numbered groupings, and the plants serve primarily as screening devices. However, the mixture of ferns, rhododendrons, and a Japanese black pine serve as references to the regional flora.

*Kuni Mukai's Garden.* In the 1920s, Kuni Mukai's garden was developed on a strawberry farm on Vashon Island. Her small island garden is adjacent to a conventional American house. The garden resonates because it was an attempt by Mrs. Mukai to cling to her native culture in the face of the complete assimilation made by her husband, a successful businessman, who was very American in the way he chose to live. Mrs. Mukai recreated a fragment of Japan, which was unusual for a woman—a strong but subtle feminist gesture.

Like Kubota's work, the Mukai garden integrated American and Japanese traditions. Mrs. Mukai used the bright flowers popular in the 1920s in America. She retained and reinforced traditional Japanese ceremonies, however. Each year she gave a garden party when the cherry trees bloomed and held separate Buddhist ceremonies for Buddhist women from Seattle. Along with some other gardens in the Pacific Northwest, the Mukai garden also retained and thus reinforced traditional Japanese ceremonies.

*Terry Welch's Garden.* Terry Welch's Woodinville, Washington, garden is strongly influenced by Japan. His moon-viewing pavilion is set apart for those remarkable times of full moon and eclipse. The stump garden uses local materials to evoke rock forms. The swimming pool also respects the rules of triangulation and asymmetrical balance. This garden unmistakably owes much to Japan but is also unmistakably American.

*Japanese Style.* Washington Park Arboretum has a classic hill stroll garden created in 1960 by Juki Iida when he was almost 70 years old. "I didn't like the [rocks] I had seen in Seattle gardens. They were all too small and pretty," Iida said. He hand-selected rock from Bandera Mountain, so similar to Mount Tsukuba of Ojima.

*Abstracted Nature.* Richard Haag, Seattle landscape architect, was much influenced by his two-year period of study in Japan. The great mound at Gasworks Park is not unlike the sand mount at Gingaku-ji or the hill at Suizen-ji. The altar was built by Osokawa Tadatshias, a copy of Mount Fuji. Haag has made a virtual model of

Mount Rainier, this region's quintessential symbol.

The gardens he designed at the Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island express the austere aspects of Zen Buddhism.

The Moss Garden, a deep place of randomness, is dominated by the moss. It is influenced by the famous moss garden at Saihoji, which was abandoned and overtaken by a carpet of moss, though at Bloedel the moss was planted.

The Bloedel Reflection Pool seems to evoke English formal gardens of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it is a Zen experience of contemplation, a symbolic place of calm celebrating the cosmos. Like Ryoanji, it requires quiet and time so that participants can become one with the forces of the universe.

### Relating to Japanese Tradition

The four modes of relating to Japanese garden traditions present our multicultural society with a challenge. Foremost is to identify where we are and who we are. Most of us do not belong to the culture of Shinto, Buddhism, or Zen Buddhism. However, we can adapt ideas from the traditions associated with them. The second is the need to establish a relationship with nature. It can be Terry Welch's tradition amounting to ceremonial celebration of reverential awe of the moon. It can be the austere and abstract act of contemplation, evoked by the reflection pool at Bloedel. It can be the calculated assimilation of Japanese ideas using the palette of Northwest plants, adopted by Fujitaro Kubota. What all of these require, however, is purpose and restraint—very different from the current mania for creating colorful gardens. The Japanese approaches for the non-Japanese teach us to understand and come to love the materials of the place where we find ourselves.

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David Streatfield is Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Washington, Seattle. He is a member of the *Bulletin* editorial board.

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# Beyond the Emperor's Gates—

## *Japanese Influences throughout Washington Park Arboretum*

BY JOHN A. WOTT, DIRECTOR

PHOTOS BY JOY SPURR

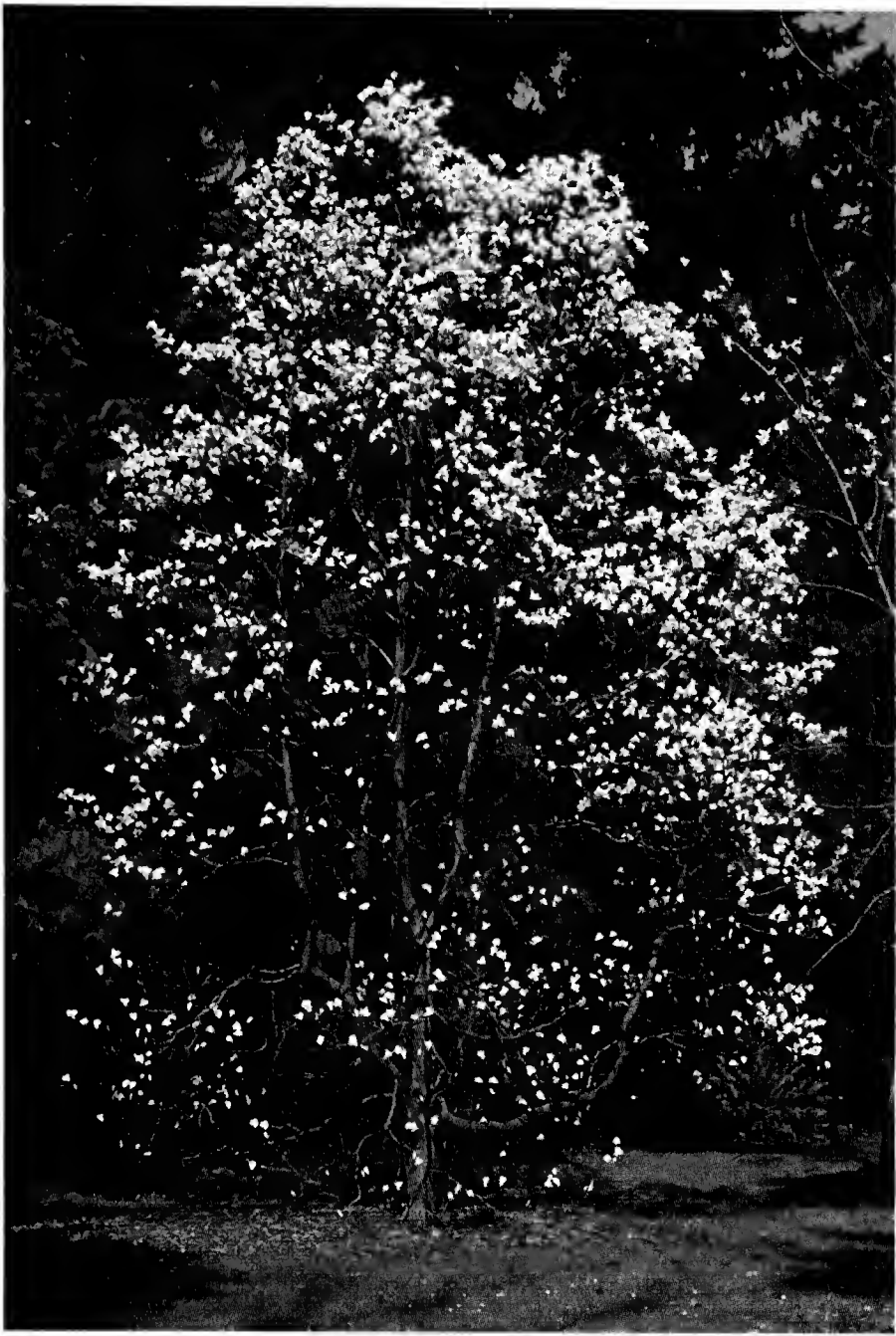


UPPER LEFT: *The azumaya steps in Washington Park's Japanese garden.* UPPER RIGHT: *Traditional gifts of flowering cherry trees were planted throughout the arboretum, such as *Prunus subhirtella* 'Autumnalis' (ABOVE).* OPPOSITE PAGE: **Magnolia salicifolia* 'Else Frye' (LEFT) and *Euonymus hamiltonianus* 'Maackii'.*

When discussing the plants and landscapes of the Northwest, we need to consider how Asian cultures, most specifically the Japanese, have influenced us. Japan's outstanding heritage of plants now enhances gardens here and throughout the world. Additional Japanese horticultural legacies, including those of the people and customs themselves, only seem to be growing in influence today.

After the arboretum was established in Washington Park, the most obvious connection to Japan became the Japanese Garden, opened in 1960. But the horticultural influence of Japan also permeates beyond the 20-acre Japanese Garden—beyond the Emperor's gates.





### Japanese Influence: Design and Culture

Thinking about the possible influence of the Japanese culture on our gardening techniques, I am reminded of what H. G. Ihrig wrote (*Arboretum Bulletin*, spring 1955). “Many people think that Japanese gardens fall into certain fixed categories, and while there are individual variations, certain basic principles are established and rigidly adhered to. While this is true of certain special types of gardens and of certain periods, it excludes much of the horticultural development of Japan.”

In a strict sense, Japan imported the art of gardening from Korea during the reign of Empress Swiko (592–628), mostly for royalty and wealthy nobles. Certainly the Korean, Chinese, and Buddhist cultures, as well as the Shinto religion with its roots deep in natural worship, all played a part in shaping Japanese gardens. Trees, rocks, water, sky, and other inanimate objects were revered and used in gardens (e.g., a rock can be revered because it looks like a turtle). We are much influenced today by these thoughts as we make choices about objects, paths, and plants in our own gardens.

One of the most notable legacies of the Japanese is their ability to blend structures with



the natural surroundings. They make special uses of all aspects of the environment. Japanese gardening is a composite of all objects, buildings, plants, and the terrain. In our gardens we consider how to use bridges, steps, pathways, screens, garden art, lights, and water and all its sounds, which often have special significance in a Japanese garden. I have just completed my own new garden, and thought about all of these aspects in its planning and implementation.

### *Arboretum Design*

Today we continue to envision the arboretum as a composite of features. Even as we renovate such arboretum areas as the Woodland Garden or Rhododendron Glen, we are much more concerned about all its parts — the terrain, the structures, the plants. This is also true of the Mulligan *Sorbus* Collection and the Witt Winter Garden, in which even the interpretive signs were considered in the original design. Certainly arboretum planners will continue this holistic view as we develop specific aspects of the new master plan.

Bernice Ferrier Smith (*Arboretum Bulletin*, fall 1967) expresses the legacy of the Japanese in her description of a garden of stones at the Ryoanji Temple, dating from 1469. An inscription is translated as “Be still and listen to the voice of the rocks.” I wonder if one of the greatest legacies of Japanese gardens is the peace and tranquillity, the calmness which pervades and enters the soul as you lose yourself in the garden. Certainly that always remains a priority throughout the Washington Park Arboretum.

Among the most beautiful built features in the arboretum are the gates constructed by George Tsutakawa, noted sculptor and painter,

who passed away late in 1997. Born in Seattle and sent at the age of seven to Japan to live with his grandparents, Tsutakawa gained much from his Japanese relatives that he used in his career. Later a University of Washington professor, perhaps he was best known for some sixty public fountains created and installed in North America and Japan.

Tsutakawa was chosen to create his own design for the arboretum's gate project, which was first envisioned for placement at the south end of Arboretum Drive East. Eventually, however, the gates were installed at the entrance to the Graham Visitors Center in 1976. Funded by The Arboretum Foundation through their Memorial Fund, the gates are a lasting gift from those who care about the arboretum. They are beautifully crafted of antique bronze and have withstood the test of time.

### *Japanese Woody Plants in the Arboretum*

(Refer to the hyphenated acquisition numbers in parentheses when asking about plants at the Graham Visitors Center).

Arboretum Foundation member Pat Ballard was very knowledgeable about Japanese trees in the arboretum (*Arboretum Bulletin*, fall 1956). Using the arboretum's huge card index, Pat and like-minded workers could hardly make it through the "A" species and cultivars of Japan in one afternoon.

Many of the trees Ballard describes are still in the collection. The graceful red-toned trunks of the Japanese red pine (*Pinus densiflora*) and the irregular form and blackish-gray bark of Japanese black pine (*Pinus thunbergii*) are well-known specimens. John Grant, famous Northwest author, called black pine one of the handsomest of the larger pines for Northwest gardens. Five-needled white pine (*P. parviflora*) can also be seen in the arboretum.

One of the larger conifers of Japanese origin is *Cryptomeria japonica*. Many dwarf forms are available for urban gardens, and gardeners should use more of this fine evergreen. The same is true for *Tsuga sieboldii*, a slow-growing hemlock. The arboretum's one remaining specimen was grown from seed sent by the Kyoto Botanical Garden in 1941 (1412-41).

*Betula maximowicziana* is one of eight species of birches currently in the collection. Also find older specimens of *B. chinensis* (136-51) and *B. platyphylla* var. *japonica* (112-46).

In the oak collection are two older specimens of *Quercus dentata* (1929-37, 1077-37). This oak has very large leaves, sometimes as long as 12 inches wide. It is truly magnificent.

Like Pat Ballard, many believe that Japan's best garden gift to us are the magnolias. *Magnolia kobus*, a large tree, covers its branches with creamy white, 4-inch-wide blossoms. Two specimens have been in the arboretum since the 1940s (868-40, 1112-49). This plant, imported with others from Japan in March 1940, was already blooming profusely upon arrival. We also have three grand specimens of *M. salicifolia*, a smaller but still elegant tree (1219-47, 818-51, 96-49).

Along Arboretum Drive East near the camellias are the handsome-barked *Stewartias*. We have two older specimens of *Stewartia monadelphica* (1548-45, 22-45), and one of *S. pseudocamellia* (1547-45), which is gorgeous while flowering.

Currently the collections contain four *Styrax*. *Styrax japonicum* and *S. obassia* are older specimens. The epaultette tree (*Pterostyrax hispida*) was grown from seed (44-48) sent to us by the Botanic Garden at Nikko.

*Cornus kousa* is now one of the most common dogwoods in urban gardens. It is small in size, but the flowering ability is outstanding.

The arboretum has a great number of both species maples and cultivars contained in the maple (*Acer*) collection as well as the outstanding Japanese Maple Collection. Noteworthy are specimens of *Acer capillipes* (659-47), *A. refinerve* (136-41), *A. cissifolium* (587-49), *A. nikoense* (754-40), and *A. diabolicum* (626-37).

Recent work on our Japanese Maple Collection in the Woodland garden has reaffirmed that it is one of the largest in a public garden in the USA. Many cultivars originally came from Mr. K. Wada, and others were added from a private collection of supposedly Japanese origin. This area of the arboretum is by far the brightest and most colorful in autumn, and probably the most photographed, as well.

The holly collection also has Japanese representatives, 14 in total. Older specimens include *Ilex integra* (1-58) and *I. pedunculosa* (633-37, 634-37).

When people think of Japanese trees, they think first of cherries. Many would be amazed to know the diversity of Japanese cherry species and cultivars growing in the arboretum.



Flowering cherries, in fact, have always been a prominent tree in Seattle Parks. In 1930, Seattle received a gift from the City of Yokohama of approximately 4000 cherry trees, which were eventually planted throughout the system: Seward and Lincoln parks, around Green Lake, along Lake Washington Boulevard, and at the Woodland Park Zoo.

Certainly, one of the most prominent features of the arboretum, always mentioned in tourist and garden brochures, is the Cherry Walk, also known as Azalea Way. Though in need of major renovation, the spring of 1997 showered us with clouds of never-ending pink and white cherry blossoms for almost six weeks. Several of my visitors were deeply enchanted by this stroll, a fact that locals often take for granted.

The Yoshino cherry, *Prunus x yedoensis*, is one of the more well-known gifts from Japan. This most famous tree is planted around the Potomac Basin in Washington, DC. According to Olmsted historian Katie Jo Johnson, a plaque is placed there in honor of Washington Park Arboretum's donation.

Based on the American eagerness for cherry blossom season, it is easy to see why the Japanese cherry blossom festivals are indeed round-the-clock celebrations in Japan. Important groups in the arboretum are the Sargent cherry, *Prunus sargentii*; Takasago cherry, *P. sieboldii*; the varieties of the Higan cherry, *P. subhirtella*; and the Yoshino cherry, *P. x yedoensis*. Currently there are 22 cultivars—about 100 trees—though the original plan specified 500.

The arboretum's new master plan calls for renovating the famed Cherry Walk. The years have taken a toll on the collection, and many plants have been lost due to growing in fine silt soils. The devastating brown rot also has weakened and killed many trees. The arboretum is now embarking on a testing program of cultivars that show disease resistance. What a sight Azalea Way should some day be in the future—and without any pesticides. See the "Cherry issue" of the *Bulletin* (1953) for articles by some of the better-known cherry experts of the day.

Pat Ballard also wrote about Japanese shrubs (in the Order Rosales) (winter 1960), including such common genera as *Hydrangea*, *Deutzia*, *Ribes*, *Distylium*, *Corylopsis*, *Hamamelis*, and *Photinia*.

(continued on page 10)



## How In the Arboretum? Transplanting Small Trees & Shrubs

If you are constantly pruning back branches that impede your garden path, transplanting may be the solution to dealing with a good plant in the wrong place. Most transplanting at WPA is done during the dormant season, November through March.

Washington Park Arboretum gardeners recommend transplanting in five steps:

1. Begin with a healthy plant. The healthier it is, the more rapid and successful its recovery. Root prune the preceding spring or fall to greatly improve the odds of survival.

2. Carefully dig and lift the root ball with a sharp square-pointed or round-pointed spade or shovel. Make the initial cut with the blade reversed to minimize disturbing the roots and fracturing the root ball. For deciduous shrubs and small trees, the minimum root-ball diameter is 10 inches per 2 feet of plant's height; this increases 2 inches per every 1 foot of height. Evergreens need a slightly larger root ball: 1 foot in diameter per 2 feet of height.

3. Protect the root ball while in transit to the new site. Place either burlap or a tarp underneath it. If it's heavy, share the load with someone else. When not planting immediately, heel-in the root ball aboveground with mulch. Keep the ball moist, and avoid exposing it to extreme temperature fluctuations.

4. Proper planting depth is crucial. Keep at the same level as before or slightly higher. Fertilize at soil surface, and then mulch and water (if dry) to settle the backfill taken from the hole. Only stake and prune if necessary.

5. Aftercare is the essential final step in transplant survival. At the arboretum, a three-year follow-up plant care program ensures successful reestablishment: Irrigate, weed, mulch, prune, monitor for pests, and train.

If the idea of transplanting is too physically demanding or daunting, call an experienced landscape specialist. Specialists have lots of experience and the proper tools and equipment to move almost anything.—David Zuckerman, gardener lead, Washington Park Arboretum.

## Acquiring New Japanese Plants

About 10 years ago, the curatorial staff of the Arboretum agreed that one of the most important priorities in selecting new plants was to make sure they were of a known origin and wild collected. Currently, the improved database lists plants and seeds received from 25 places or people of Japanese origin. Many of these arrive by annual exchanges through the *Index Seminum*, the international seed exchange program. Two institutions have been major contributors. Since 1950, this includes 41 accessions from the Experimental Forest Station, Kyoto University, Kyoto, and since 1990, 23 from Chiba University, Laboratory of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture, Matsudo City, Chiba Prefecture. Other prominent donors include Ofona Botanic Garden, Okamoto, Kanagawa; Tokyo University, Botanical Garden, Tokyo; and Hokkaido University Botanic Garden, Sapporo.

We are also currently thankful to contemporary collectors such as Daniel Hinkley of Heronswood Nursery in Kingston, Washington,

who travels the world for both new and re-introductions. Dan has graciously given the Arboretum seed or plants from these introductions, and we are looking forward to acquisitions from his autumn 1997 Japanese trip.

## Current Collections

The selection of plants in our collections within the arboretum continue to be profoundly affected by Japan. Recently, I asked Midori Murai, formerly in the registrar's office, to run some statistics through our BG-Base records. Of the nearly 4200 different taxa in the arboretum, 294 or nearly 7% appear to be of Japanese origin. This includes 884 different accessions, nearly 9% of our collections.

The list of names and numbers of taxa of Japanese origin is quite interesting:

Twenty-five: *Rhododendron* (includes azaleas)

Twenty-two: *Acer* (maple) (in addition to Japanese maples)

Fourteen: *Ilex* (holly)

Twelve: *Quercus* (oak)

Ten: *Prunus* (cherry)

Eight: *Betula* (birch), *Viburnum*

Six: *Abies* (fir), *Pinus* (pine)

Five: *Alnus* (alder), *Carpinus*, *Picea* (spruce), *Vaccinium*

Four: *Euonymus*, *Lonicera* (honeysuckle), *Ligustrum* (privet), *Salix* (willow)

## An Arboretum Is Also for People

Today any great arboretum also needs to add people into the mix of plants. The Graham Visitors Center features activities such as the Japanese Garden Guides training programs. Most notable are the flower shows presented by the many schools of Japanese flower arranging, such as the Sogetsu School of Ikebana. The Children's festival held in the Japanese Garden also incorporates ethnic traditions and will continue to do so into the future.

John A. Wott, professor at the University of Washington, is Director of the Washington Park Arboretum. Dr. Wott is Secretary-Treasurer of the International Plant Propagators Society and editorial board member of the *Bulletin*.



## Where in the Bulletin?

**R**ead about Washington Park Arboretum's Japanese Garden and plant introductions in past *Bulletins*. Find copies at the Elisabeth C. Miller Library, Center for Urban Horticulture.

Spring 1953. Includes articles on flowering cherry trees. 16(1).

Spring 1955. "Japanese Gardens—A Layman's Observations." H. G. Ihrig. 18(1):3-4; 32.

Fall 1956. "Japanese Trees in Our Arboretum." Pat Ballard. 19(3):84-87; 98-99.

Winter 1960. "Japanese Shrubs in the Arboretum (of the Order Rosales)." Pat Ballard. 23(4):125-26; 139-140.

Winter 1960. Juki Iida and Associates. "Our Japanese Garden." 23(4):135-7.

Fall 1967. "The Voice of the Rocks." Bernice Ferrier Smith. 30(3):63; 70.

Summer 1990. Honoring the Japanese Garden's 30th Anniversary. 53(2): 36 pages.



# For Further Information Japanese Garden Aesthetics

BY VALERIE EASTON

Books abound on the gardens of Japan and on how to create such gardens. The Elisabeth C. Miller Library at the Center for Urban Horticulture has dozens of volumes on bonsai, for example. But fewer resources are available on the more subtle subject of how the aesthetics of Japanese gardens have influenced Northwest gardens or on the more useful subject of how we can best adapt these aesthetics for use in our own gardens. The books listed below, all available in the Miller Library, are a good start to exploring the art, myth, and characteristics of Japanese gardens.

Ishimoto, Tatsuo. *The Art of the Japanese Garden*. New York: Crown, 1958. This little book is no doubt out of print, but worth seeking out. It is as deceptively simple yet multi-layered as the gardens it describes, with chapters on "Gardens within Gardens," "A Feeling of Spaciousness," and "The Suggestion of Water." The basic elements are here, illustrated with black and white photos.

Oster, Maggie. *Reflections of the Spirit: Japanese Gardens in America*. New York: Penguin Books, 1993. "Images of Japanese-influenced gardens shall remain in my head and heart forever, filling me with their quiet energy," begins Oster in this oversized picture book. Her goal is to translate the Japanese garden to the Western landscape. The Northwest is represented with photos taken in Portland, Oregon, and at the Bloedel Reserve, on Bainbridge Island, Washington. More importantly, a great number of the photos of stone, evergreens, and mossy hillsides are evocative of our Pacific Northwest landscapes.

Seike, Kiyoshi, Masanobu Kudo, and David H. Engel. *A Japanese Touch for Your Garden*. New York: Kodansha International, 1980. The grammar and vocabulary of the Japanese garden—stone, streams, lanterns, and plants—is broken down to their individual elements and then combined in practical, lovely possibilities for Western gardens. Materials, design, planning,

and building are all covered. The book concentrates on the integration of house and garden, with examples of courtyards, stepping-stones, small ponds, and bamboo fences—all on a scale appropriate for homes and gardens.

Slawson, David A. *Secret Teachings in the Art of Japanese Gardens: Design Principles, Aesthetic Values*. Tokyo: Kodansha International,

1987. "To the woods of my childhood beyond our house," reads the dedication of this book. Influenced by this early love of nature, Slawson apprenticed in garden-making in Japan, after receiving a degree in East Asian philosophy. He has written this volume to help Westerners understand both the aesthetics and design principles of Japanese gardens, and the reverence for nature central to their creation.

The Arboretum Foundation. *Washington Park Arboretum Bulletin*. Honoring the Japanese Garden's 30th Anniversary. 36 pages. Seattle: The Arboretum Foundation, 1990: 53(2).

Bibb, Elizabeth, and Michael S. Yamashita. *In the Japanese Garden*. Washington, DC: Starwood Publishing, 1991.

Ishimoto, Tatsuo, and Kiyoko Ishimoto. *Japanese Gardens Today: How the Japanese Use Rocks, Water, Plants*. New York: Crown, 1968.

Jerome, Kate, and The Japanese Garden Society of Oregon. *Oriental Gardening*. The American Garden Guides. New York: Pantheon Books, 1996.

Newsom, Samuel. *A Japanese Garden Manual for Westerners: Basic Design and Construction*. Tokyo: Tokyo News Service, 1965.

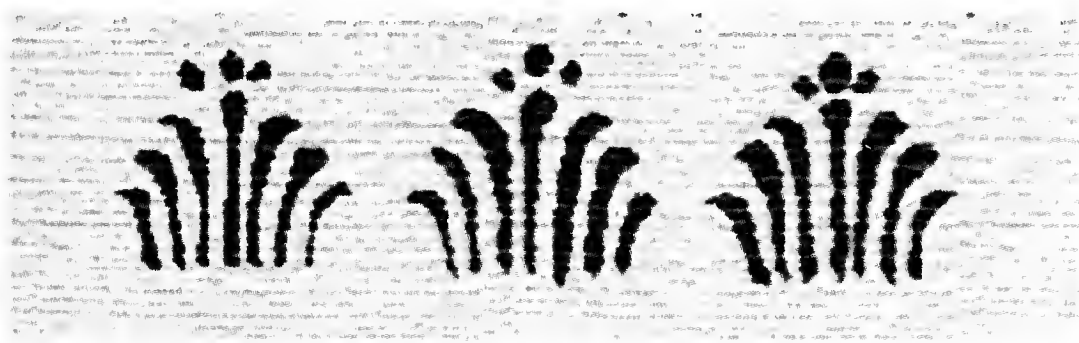
Saito, Katsuo. *Japanese Gardening Hints*. Tokyo: Japan Publications, Inc., 1969.

Sawyers, Claire E., editor. *Japanese Gardens*. Brooklyn, New York: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1985.

Suzuki, Osamu, and Isao Yoshikawa. *The Bamboo Fences of Japan*. Tokyo: Graphic-sha Publishing, 1988.

Yoshikawa, Isao. *Stone Basins: The Accents of Japanese Gardens*. Tokyo: Graphic-sha Publishing, 1989.

Valerie Easton is library manager at the University of Washington Center for Urban Horticulture.



# Just a Short Walk *to* Japan

BY MIDORI MURAI AND JOHN WOTT

A large number of plants originating in Japan can be found in Washington Park Arboretum, so you only need to venture onto the grounds for a sampling. But if you wish to find many specimens in a relatively small area, look near the Graham Visitors Center parking lot. All of the following are attractive in our Northwest urban landscapes.



ABOVE: A mature specimen of *Zelkova serrata* in the Tsukuba Botanical Garden, one of the arboretum's sources for Japanese acquisitions. Find smaller specimens at each corner of the Graham Visitors Center parking lot. LEFT: *Prunus x yedoensis*, to the left of the walkway into the Visitors Center. BELOW: Candy-scented fall leaves of *katsura*.





*Clematis terniflora* grows to more than 15 feet, with the stems often tangling. White flowers clustered on panicles provide a fall flower show. Find it near the kitchen entrance to the Visitors Center.

*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, commonly called katsura, is represented by several specimens in the parking strip. During fall, the candy scent emitted from the leaves often stops people and sends them into the Visitors Center to inquire.

*Enkianthus campanulatus* 'Red Bells', planted next to the Visitors Center, is a dwarf form. The leaves are clustered at the tip of the branchlets—dull green until turning vivid red in fall. The red flowers form in clusters, appearing in late spring to summer.

*Kadsura japonica*, an evergreen climber, can grow to over 12 feet tall. Its glossy leaves are egg-shaped, the flowers are ivory, and the berries are scarlet. The sticky sap of the vine was often mixed with water and used as grease for hair.

*Prunus x yedoensis*, popular along the Washington, DC, tidal basin, can be found to the left of the eastern entrance to Graham Visitors Center.

*Trachycarpus wagnerianus*, adjacent to the Educational Greenhouse, is a wonderful palm. One of six so-called fan palms, it can grow to over 20 feet. It looks like the more common *T. fortunei*, but with smaller leaves. Now only known in cultivation, it is hardy to zone 9.

*Trochodendron aralioides*, the wheel tree, has greenish wheel-like flowers. Find it in the center of the courtyard south of the Visitors Center. This evergreen is the only species in the primitive Trochodendraceae family. It reaches about 60 feet in nature. The leaves are spirally arranged, and petioles are very long. The flowers, which have no petals, form in early summer. People once made bird-catching glue from the bark.

*Zelkova serrata*. (Japanese zelkova) is found at each corner of the parking lot; these deciduous trees can grow to more than 100 feet tall. The hairy leaves have fine teeth and numerous straight veins. They are yellow-green early in the season, and fall color ranges from orange and yellow to vivid red. Because of being relatively slow growing, zelkova wood is highly prized. A huge specimen is in 35-4E and 36-3E near Arboretum Drive. In Japan, zelkova is often used along streets, in temples and shrines, and in parks, much as native eastern oaks are used in the eastern United States.



## Where and How in the Arboretum? *Abies firma*

(Momi or Japanese fir)



Photo courtesy of University  
Forest at Chichibu web site

Fir trees comprise one of the most important collections at WPA. Many different *Abies* species and types are represented.

One of the newest specimens, *Abies firma*, was acquired through the Arboretum Foundation's Adopt-a-Tree Program. The tree was donated by Dr. and Mrs. Jack Gustafson in memory of Dr. J. Tate Mason.

The new *A. firma* is very valuable to the Arboretum because of its rarity. It was grown from wild seed, which was sent from Chiba University, Japan, in 1992 and then grown at the CUH nursery.

In the arboretum, *A. firma* will reach 60 to 70 feet tall, though in the wild, it reaches 100 feet. Find it in Rhododendron Glen near parking lot 6.

### How to Adopt an Arboretum Tree

Twice yearly, the arboretum's horticultural staff members create a list of special trees they would like for the spring and fall planting schedules. To help, you may adopt and sponsor one of the trees from the list, in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special friend of the arboretum.

If you wish, help plant the tree; otherwise, a knowledgeable arboretum staff member will show you the specimen after it is in place. The name of the person honored will be attached to the planting map and printed in The Arboretum Foundation annual report (no plaque is attached to the tree).

The tree donation cost of \$1000 provides for the specimen's lifetime care. For information on adopting a tree, call The Arboretum Foundation at (206) 325-4510.

# The Japanese Design Connection

BY ARTHUR R. KRUCKEBERG

PHOTOS: JOY SPURR & A. KRUCKEBERG

A stroll through the Japanese Garden at Washington Park reveals a lavish blend of nature and Asian art forms: trees sculpted to exacting, traditional shapes; vistas of intimate landscapes; and, for the connoisseur, an artful mix of stone, water, and plants. But for me, recently the quest was for the kinds of Pacific Northwest native plants used to create a Japanese ambience.

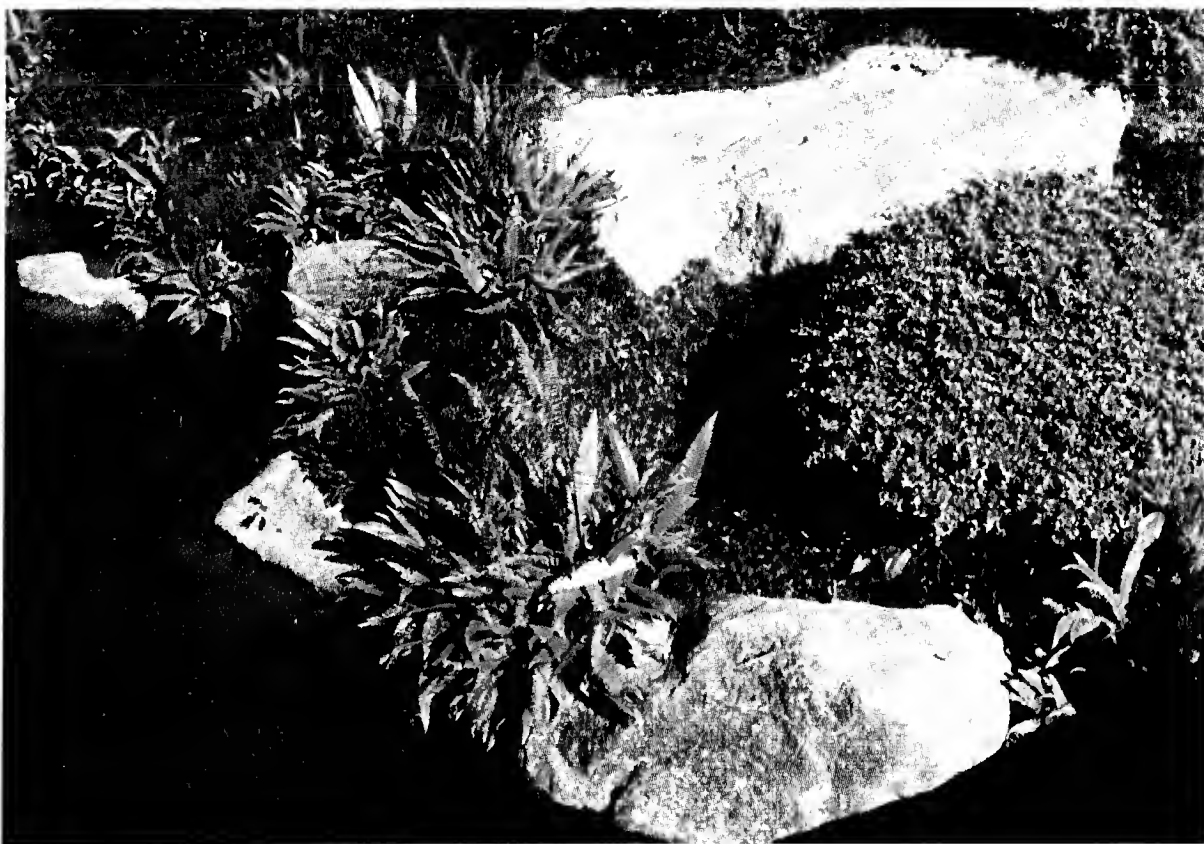
## Northwest Natives in the Japanese Garden?

I wanted to see if there were Pacific Northwest native plants in the garden that were deliberately used to foster the Japanese garden art form. I found a few.

Most of the dominant trees forming the living structure of the garden have their origins elsewhere; pines, spruces, cypresses, and hardwoods, such as maple, are all from Japan. The Northwest native woody plants I found







*Opposite page:*

UPPER: *Alaska cedar*  
 LOWER: *Lady fern* against a rock wall at the north end of the Japanese Garden (ARK photos)

*This page:*

UPPER: Native backdrop to the Japanese Garden; in foreground is a Japanese black pine (*Pinus thunbergii*) (ARK photo)

MIDDLE LEFT: *Rhododendron occidentale* (JS photo)

MIDDLE RIGHT: *Quercus sadleriana* (JS photo)

BOTTOM: *Deer fern* in Washington Park's Japanese Garden (ARK photo)

were not keystone elements of the place.

The most conspicuous native trees in the Japanese Garden are two conifer species. The mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*), just inside the south entrance, is an elegant two-trunk specimen directly behind a large granite rock. The other notable native conifer is the group of Alaska cedars (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis* 'Pendula'), just north of the Emperor's Gate, on the east side. Occasional western red cedars (*Thuja plicata*) can be seen in the background of other plantings.

Of the hardwoods, vine maple (*Acer circinatum*) occurs frequently. Particularly pleasing to this native plant aficionado is the generous use of native evergreen ferns: Deer fern (*Blechnum spicant*) and sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*) appear frequently in the Japanese Garden as understory specimens, either singly or in groups.

Yet I had expected more Northwest natives in the garden. After all, the mild, temperate Puget Sound country has natural affinities with Japan. The wooded coastlines that abound in the San Juan Islands have a strong Japanese look to them: rocky outcrops clothed with conifers and hardwoods right down to the water's edge. There, Douglas-fir, madrone, and understory shrubs often are stunted and bent by the elements, resembling the eastern shorelines of Honshu, Japan's main island. The Pacific Northwest's Japanese affinity extends to both regions, having comparable native flora, at least at the genus level. Conifers, such as pine, fir, cedar, and spruce, as well as several hardwood genera (oak, maple, birch, alder, ericaceous shrubs to name just a few!) occur in both North Pacific regions.

In the past, the Pacific Northwest–eastern Asia link was even more intimate. Long before the Ice Age, Japan and our land shared the katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*), the keyake (*Zelkova serrata*), and a host of other warm-temperate species.

### NW Natives for Japanese-like Settings

My goal in this pursuit of the horticultural-botanical connection between Japan and the Pacific Northwest was to probe this question: Are there native plants of our region that can replace or add to Japanese species? They should have attributes of form, texture, and pliability to give them a Japanese

character. The easy answer in concept and in practice is yes! Nearly any woody plant in our flora can be massaged into a Japanese form.

The Japanese art form with plants comes in three levels of magnitude.

First is wild nature as witnessed in Japan's national parks and nature preserves; their counterparts can be found in the Pacific Northwest. At the more domestic level is the traditional Japanese garden, such as the Riki-Jien in Tokyo, the Tokushima Castle Garden on Shikoku, and our own Washington Park exemplar. Finally, in the most intimate, small-scale level, is the bonsai specimen, or the dish garden, and the popular container plantings. For both the Japanese-style garden and the bonsai art form, it is not difficult to find woody species in our flora that can be used.

To begin with are the conifers; several can be adapted to the Japanese style. Though too fast growing for open plantings, Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) will work, if its root-run is confined and its growing tips are clipped judiciously. I have seen it as a container plant to good effect. Among the pines, two or three can make the Asian transformation. *Pinus contorta* subsp. *contorta* (shore pine), *P. monticola* (western white pine), and with luck, *P. albicaulis* (whitebark pine) merit trial. Young shore pine can be crafted into pleasing shapes and even can fit the bonsai mold. Whitebark pine, a close relative of two Japanese five-needle pines (*P. parviflora* and *P. pumila*), can simulate the Japanese style. This timberline pine is a bit miffy at sea level but well worth a try.

Some true firs (*Abies*) are natural stand-ins for Japanese conifers. Our region's best are *Abies lasiocarpa* (subalpine fir) and *A. procera* (noble fir). Of our two native hemlocks, give the lovely *Tsuga mertensiana* (mountain hemlock) pride of place in a Japanesque setting. It is slow-growing, accommodates well to shaping, and is elegant in a container or in a garden setting.

Japan's two cypresses have Northwest kin. Alaska cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) should be an elegant substitute for the Hinoki and Sawara cypresses of Japan. One spruce, the Siskiyou endemic, *Picea breweriana* (weeping spruce), has a pendant form and slow growth that receives high marks as a bonsai subject.

My first choice among our native hardwood trees for taking on a Japanese aura surely has to be vine maple (*Acer circinatum*).



Not only does it have kin in Japan (*A. palmatum* and *A. japonicum*), but it can readily be formed to appear just like its Asian counterparts, either in the garden or as a bonsai subject. Our other small maple, *A. glabrum* (Sierra maple), should be tried in a similar fashion.

We go to the southern border of the Pacific Northwest (southern Oregon) for other suitable trees: the evergreen oaks, *Quercus chrysolepis* (canyon live oak), and *Q. sadleriana* (the arborescent deer oak).

Matching Pacific Northwest native shrubs to the Japanese decor works best by plant family. Both Japan and our region abound in members of the heather family (Ericaceae). A perfect example of matching at the genus level is with *Menziesia*; our species, *M. ferruginea* (rusty-leaf or fool's huckleberry), has the same branching pattern as its Japanese kin, *Menziesia ciliicalyx* and *M. purpurea*.

The same matching of form is possible with *Rhododendron* and *Vaccinium*. Our western azalea (*Rhododendron occidentale*) has its look-alike in the Japanese *R. japonicum*. One Northwest ericaceous shrub, endemic to the Siskiyou mountains, has no relative in Japan, but easily fits the Asian gestalt: *Kalmiopsis leachiana* is our dainty match for small-leaved evergreens from Japan, such as *Rhododendron yedoense* or *R. camtschaticum*.

For form and branch pattern, the best of the Japanese look-alikes in *Vaccinium* is *V. parvifolium* (red huckleberry). Its angular stems and twigs, its small leaves and flower festooned with soft pink bells, should look natural when placed in a Japanese setting.

Other Pacific Northwest shrubs can pass the test of Asian flavor. To start, try *Betula glandulosa* (bog birch), our two shrubby alders (*Alnus incana* and *A. sinuata*), and the shrubby oaks of the Siskiyou mountains—*Quercus breweri*, *Q. sadleriana*, *Q. vaccinifolia*, and *Lithocarpus densiflorus* var. *echinoides*.

For herbaceous perennials and ground covers, again seek matches at the genus and even species level. For instance, I found our two common ground-huggers, *Linnaea borealis* (twin-flower) and *Cornus canadensis* (bunchberry) in northern Japan; there they appear very much at home in the subalpine zone. Both had a daintier look to them than their Pacific Northwest counterparts.

I already have applauded the wide use

of native ferns in Washington Park's Japanese Garden. Besides the frequently used deer fern and sword fern, two others appear there. The deciduous lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) adorns the rock wall at the north end of the pond and is also at the water's edge. I found a lone specimen of licorice fern (*Polypodium glycyrrhiza*) on a shaded stump. Other native ferns can fit the Japanese decor: Anderson's sword fern (*Polystichum andersonii*) is an elegant, tall, dissected-frond version of sword fern. Another evergreen fern of majestic stature is *Woodwardia fimbriata* (chain fern). The shield fern (*Dryopteris inexpana*), also a woodlander, merits use. For ferns in Japanese rock work try parsley fern (*Cryptogramma crispa*) in full sun and the dainty spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) in shade.

## Cultivars of Pacific Northwest Natives

Nature has given us a special brand of Northwest natives that seem ready-made for a Japanese effect. Spontaneous mutants of wild species often have attributes that suit the Japanese style. These mutant variants have been propagated for garden culture; as such they have been given cultivar names.

Our native conifers have yielded a bounty of dwarf or slow-growing cultivars. The most prolific spawner of cultivars must be Lawson cypress (Port Orford cedar, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*); there is a cultivar for every setting. Fewer in number are the cultivars of Alaska cedar (*C. nootkatensis*); a particularly apt one is 'Green Arrow' (a dwarf exclamation point!).

Rare and choice is the miniature 'DuFlon', a dwarf form of our subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), propagated from the wild Olympic mountain range. Several other cultivars of this species are dwarf in habit and merit trial for bonsai. Mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*) has several slow-growing, shrubby cultivars; unsurpassed is 'Elizabeth' with soft gray-green foliage. Nearly every other native conifer has a modest roster of inviting cultivars, even Douglas-fir.

Cultivars of our native hardwoods are uncommon. Two choice forms of vine maple (*Acer circinatum*) are eminently suited to the Japanese scene. The best is *A. circinatum* 'Monroe' with finely dissected foliage, like forms of the Japanese *A. palmatum*. Two others, 'Elegant' and 'Little Gem', merit trial.

Among our native shrubs, those that have been in cultivation for years have sported

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cultivars, and some can take to the Japanese palette. Look for these cultivars of *Mahonia aquifolium* (Oregon grape): 'Atropurpurea' with reddish purple leaves in winter, and 'Heterophylla', a low-growing form with glossy leaves. Our red-flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) comes in a variety of sizes and flower color; so give these a trial: 'Albidum' (white flowers) or 'Atrorubens' (crimson flowers).

I have one final thought. Because of the biogeographic affinities between Japan and the coastal Northwest, matching of look-alikes can be amply expanded, especially in the shrub and herbaceous perennial modes.

### More Reading

Two guides to further pursuit of the Japan—Pacific Northwest horticultural alliance can help identify and acquire desirable natives: my book, *Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest*, now in its second edition (1997), and *Hortus West*, an invaluable buyer's guide for acquiring native plants. Both references are in the Elisabeth C. Miller Library.

Three references, also in the Elisabeth C. Miller Library, can open windows to the world of cultivars of Pacific Northwest natives: Read *North American Landscape Trees* by Arthur L. Jacobson; for conifers, search M. Zsolt's *Conifer Treasury of the World* and the old standby, *W. J. Bean's Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles* (eighth edition). While at the Miller Library, get a free bibliography of native plants.

*The Plants of the Japanese Garden: An Alphabetical List* by Kathleen Smith should be consulted for a more comprehensive roster of natives in Washington Park's Japanese Garden. Curiously, the ferns are not cited. The booklet is available for \$3.00 at the ticket booth.

Arthur R. Kruckeberg is Professor Emeritus, University of Washington. He and his wife Mareen own MsK Nursery, Richmond Beach, Washington, which specializes in native plants. Dr. Kruckeberg is a founder of the Washington Native Plant Society and is an editorial board member of the *Bulletin*.



# A Few Japanese Hydrangeas and Their Close Allies

BY DANIEL J. HINKLEY

PHOTOS BY LYNNE HARRISON

*Dan Hinkley has traveled extensively in Asia to observe plants in their native habitats as well as collect seed of taxa that he evaluates for garden potential in the Pacific Northwest. Dan returned to Korea and Japan in autumn 1997 to study, among other genera, numerous species of Hydrangea that are infrequently found in cultivation in the West. His first trip to Korea, in 1993, was sponsored in part by The Arboretum Foundation.*

In autumn 1997, I explored the mountains of Korea and Japan for eight weeks to observe and collect seeds of plants in their native habitats. I had been intrigued by the number of *Hydrangea* species I observed in both countries on previous occasions. Consequently, a major focus of this trip was to further explore this genus, which comprises numerous species that have yet to be fully appreciated in climates that can accommodate them.

My traveling companions included Bleddyn and Sue Wynn-Jones of Crug Farm Plants in Wales, with whom I had traveled previously in Korea, Japan, and eastern Nepal, and Darrell Probst of Cobblewood Nursery, Hubbardston, Massachusetts. Darrell is an expert on *Epimedium* and *Tricyrtis*. I also had traveled with him to the Yunnan and Sichuan provinces of China in 1996.

Though we made several good collections of *Hydrangea* species throughout Korea, it was not until we returned to Japan that we began in earnest to locate and collect several *Hydrangea* species endemic

(continued, page 20)



ABOVE: *Cardiantora alternifolia*  
BELOW: *Hydrangea involucrata*



to the Japanese archipelago.

We concentrated our efforts on five areas of Honshu and Shikoku Island, each quite rich in members of Hydrangeaceae, with distinct associations of different species at each locality. The Kei Peninsula is a large land mass that juts into the Pacific Ocean, with Osaka on its upper northwest corner and Nagoya on the upper northeast. While on the Kei Peninsula in central Honshu, we were overwhelmed by the number of *Hydrangea* species and related genera growing together.

We based our activities in the relatively small, centrally positioned city of Hashimoto and explored the large mountain range rising to the southeast.

### *Hydrangea hirta*

On our first day in the mountains, we encountered *Hydrangea hirta*, a species virtually unknown in Western cultivation. The rounded leaves, to 3 inches, are distinct in possessing an extremely dentate leaf margin. It grew in great abundance there in moderate shade, beneath a canopy of deciduous and evergreen trees at approximately 3,000 feet elevation.

In May, profuse terminal flowers of light blue are formed in compact corymbs to 3 inches across atop 4-foot stems, lacking the expanded sepals on sterile florets that we associate with the hydrangeas as a whole. Though I already possess plants of this species, raised by seed provided by the Tsukuba Botanic Garden in Japan, this was my first encounter with it in the wild. *Hydrangea hirta* is a handsome shrub that certainly deserves more evaluation for use in Northwest gardens.

### *Hydrangea sikokiana*

Also on this first day, I discovered a single specimen of another species that we had hoped to find during our time on Shikoku Island the week prior and which eluded us during several days of exploring the mountains on the southeastern shore of that large island.

Thus, as light was dimming in the afternoon, I was quite excited to find *Hydrangea sikokiana*, which is not only remarkably scarce in cultivation, but is the only other species with foliage approaching the uniqueness of the oakleaf hydrangea, *H. quercifolia*. Even in Japanese nurseries, we found large numbers of its American

cousin offered for sale, and not a single specimen of their own striking native to be seen.

The foliage of *H. sikokiana* is quite astounding, possessing sharply lobed leaves to 15 inches long and 7 inches wide, with 15-inch corymbs of white fertile flowers surrounded by sterile florets with white sepals. They are borne on handsome, exfoliating stems of light brown that rise to 15 feet or more. We did not find seed, however, and left that evening quite disappointed. The next day we returned to slightly higher elevations, however, and found numerous specimens of this remarkable species carrying large heads of ripened seed capsules.

### *Hydrangea luteo-venosa*

In this same area, we also found *Hydrangea luteo-venosa*, another rare species that certainly deserves more recognition than it currently enjoys in the West. We had already collected seed of this species on Shikoku Island, where we found it common as an understory shrub at a wide range of elevations.

Foliage of *H. luteo-venosa* is quite narrow, less than one inch, with serrations present on the leaf margin along the terminal quarter of its total length of 4 inches. In full sun situations, the foliage had transformed to lovely tints of burgundy that were a good complement to the characteristic brownish purple stems. Numerous specimens observed on both Shikoku and the Kei Peninsula were still in flower and quite handsome, with quantities of 4-inch corymbs surrounded by creamy white, fading to yellow, sepals of the sterile florets.

This species has already blossomed in my woodland at Heronswood, where I raised it from seed nearly eight years ago. It performs quite admirably in the climate of the Puget Sound area where it often blooms before June. I am interested to see if the plants resulting from our 1997 seed collection of this species prove as precocious as the clone I currently cultivate.

During the subsequent three days in this area of Japan, it became quite apparent that, as a whole, the Hydrangeaceae family had done quite well for itself in this region. An amazing contingent of *Hydrangea* species and close relatives grew side by side, though a large and interesting inventory of additional genera was represented. Well known to Northwest horticulturists, *H. macrophylla* var. *serrata* and *H. paniculata* grew adjacent to the two species



already discussed, while climbing numerous trees were both *H. anomala* var. *petiolaris* and its close relative, *Schizophragma hydrangeoides*.

### *Hydrangea involucrata*

More rarely encountered were two additional *Hydrangea* species that require further inspection—*H. involucrata* and *H. scandens*.

The former is known reasonably well in Western cultivation and is represented in the collection of hydrangeas at Washington Park Arboretum. The handsome, felted green leaves of this species grow to 6 inches long, while the very lovely bicolor inflorescences of mauve fertile flowers surrounded by white sterile florets open from curious globular buds in early August. (Its double-flowered cultivar, *H. involucrata* 'Hortensis', is an eagerly sought selection, with entire inflorescences of fully double-flowered sterile florets in shades of cream and pink.) We observed *H. involucrata* in three areas of south-central Honshu, where it formed sizable specimens to 15 feet that would dwarf the plants in my garden, which mature to neat and tidy mounds of 4 feet x 4 feet. I suspect that my garden plants are in fact a dwarf selection of this species, which is certainly possible, considering the number of selected forms available in Japanese horticulture.

### *Hydrangea scandens*

*Hydrangea scandens*, on the other hand, has a very short history under cultivation in the West. The taxonomy of this genus is in a constant state of flux, while the individual taxa show a great deal of diversity throughout their range. These two factors make it quite difficult to confidently place a name on any taxon without the benefit of seeing entire populations. The specimens of *H. scandens* we observed possessed glossy leaves to 4 inches with an acuminate and serrate leaf tip, along stems rising to 5 feet. The inflorescence was similar in size and appearance to those of *H. luteo-venosa*, though all that we observed had long since blossomed and any distinguishing traits had dissolved.

### *Deinanthef bifida*

As if it were not enough that nearly every shrub and vine echoed the familiar lace-cap effect provided by the hydrangeas, the two most

prominent herbaceous perennials here, both in Hydrangeaceae, also provided identically shaped inflorescences.

The better known of these two is *Deinanthef bifida*, an herbaceous species that carries handsome felted leaves to 6 inches, held in pairs along stems to 3 feet. As the species name implies, the leaves are bifid, with the leaf tip divided into two prominent, sharply pointed lobes. In summer, stems are capped by heads of white flowers encircled with gracefully nodding and precious waxy, white sterile florets. I have coddled this species, as well as its Chinese counterpart, *D. caerulea*, for several years in my woodland garden, so was overwhelmed not only by the vigor these plants possessed in their native haunts, but the sheer number growing in the damp and cool soils of these mountains.

### *Cardiandra alternifolia*

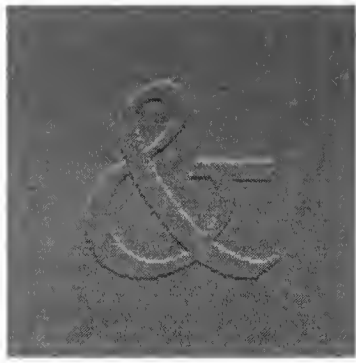
In contrast, *Cardiandra alternifolia* was less frequently seen in this area, though we had previously collected it in Chiba Prefecture northwest of Tokyo. An herbaceous perennial, its stems rise to 15 inches, bearing alternately arranged, somewhat glabrous leaves to 5 inches. In summer, terminal heads of very pretty lacecaps are produced with pink fertile florets surrounded by pink sterile florets. This has already proven to be an exceptionally ornamental species for us in the Pacific Northwest; I have successfully cultivated it as well as *Cardiandra formosana*, collected by the Wynn-Joneses in Taiwan in 1994; *C. formosana* possesses more deeply saturated rose red flowers.

The mountains of Japan and Korea once again proved to be a treasure trove of botanical wonders that ultimately may become more widely grown and appreciated in the Pacific Northwest. I already anticipate future trips to these remarkable countries—an invaluable, exhilarating means to more fully understand the immense inventory of ornamental plants that they possess.

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Dan Hinkley is co-owner of Heronswood Nursery, Ltd. In 1998, his plant-related travels will take him to Chile, China, Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania. He is currently writing a book for Timber Press, on rare and unusual perennials.

Stone



Water

*Robert Murase's Sense of Place*

BY MARTHA POLK WINGATE

Cold, hard stone, and not a philodendron in sight. The Pier 69 atrium at the Port of Seattle may appear to be an unusual project for a landscape architect, but Robert Murase took the indoor setting and made it part of the Northwest without planting a tree.

Granite takes the place of maples and mosses, and a stream runs through the middle of the space. Outside, the borrowed landscape is Elliott Bay.

"I wanted a sense of the Northwest without using the Northwest plant palette," says Murase. "I made a conscious decision not to be stuck with tropical plants." Typically, interiors are landscaped with the usual mall plants—palms, Scheffleras, cast-iron plants—but these were not even considered when Murase designed the large, airy space that is traveled by workers and visitors to the Port of Seattle Administrative Headquarters.

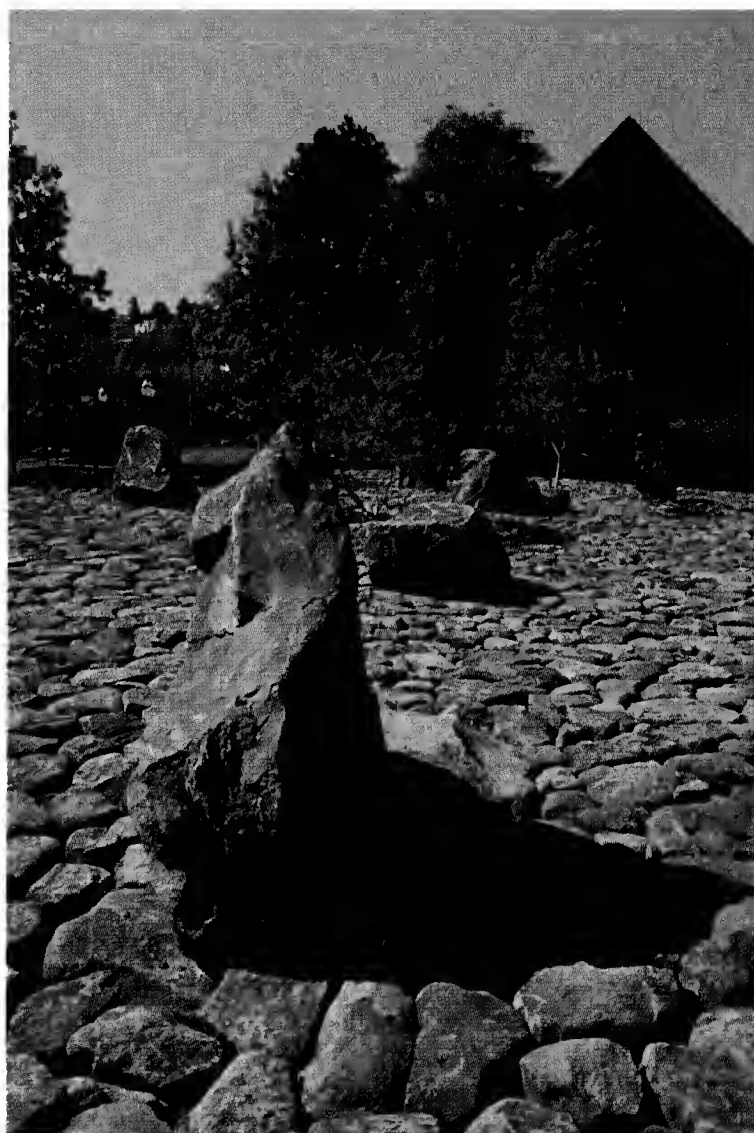
For Murase, the 750-foot atrium could not be a tropical paradise.

A third-generation Japanese-American, Murase trained at the University of California at Berkeley as a landscape architect. Subsequently, he moved his family to Kyoto in order to gain the experience he wanted. Now based in Seattle and Portland, he interprets the style of Japanese garden design using the essential elements of stone and water to create a sense of place—the Northwest.

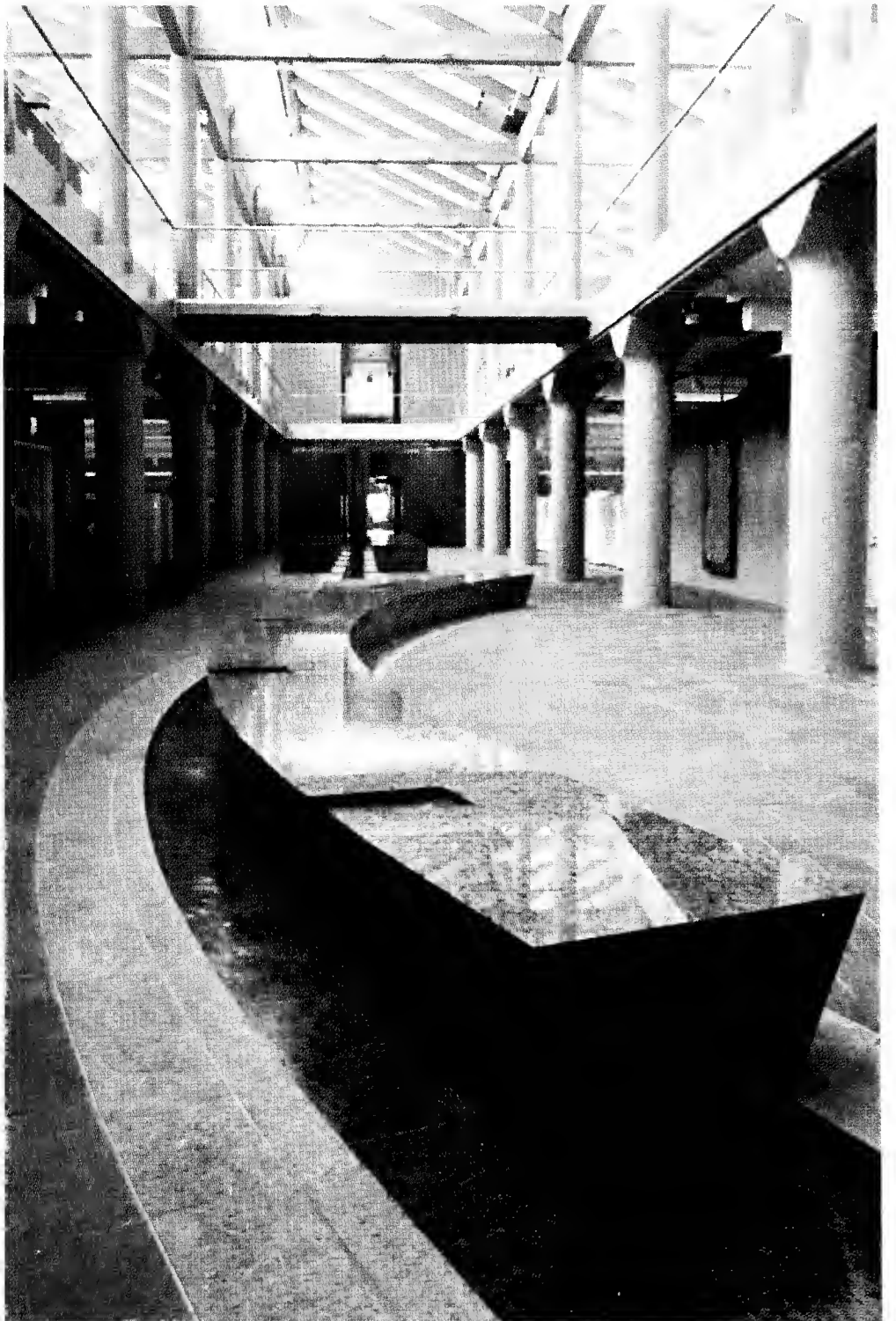
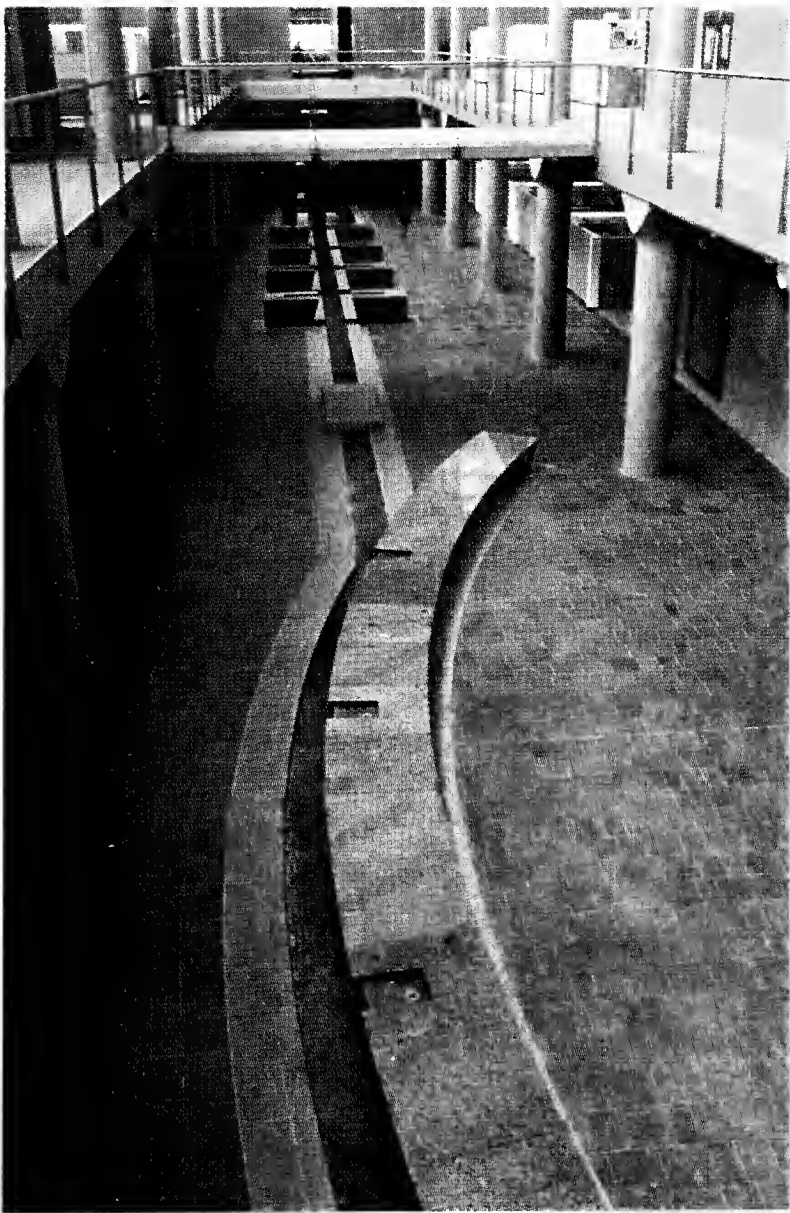
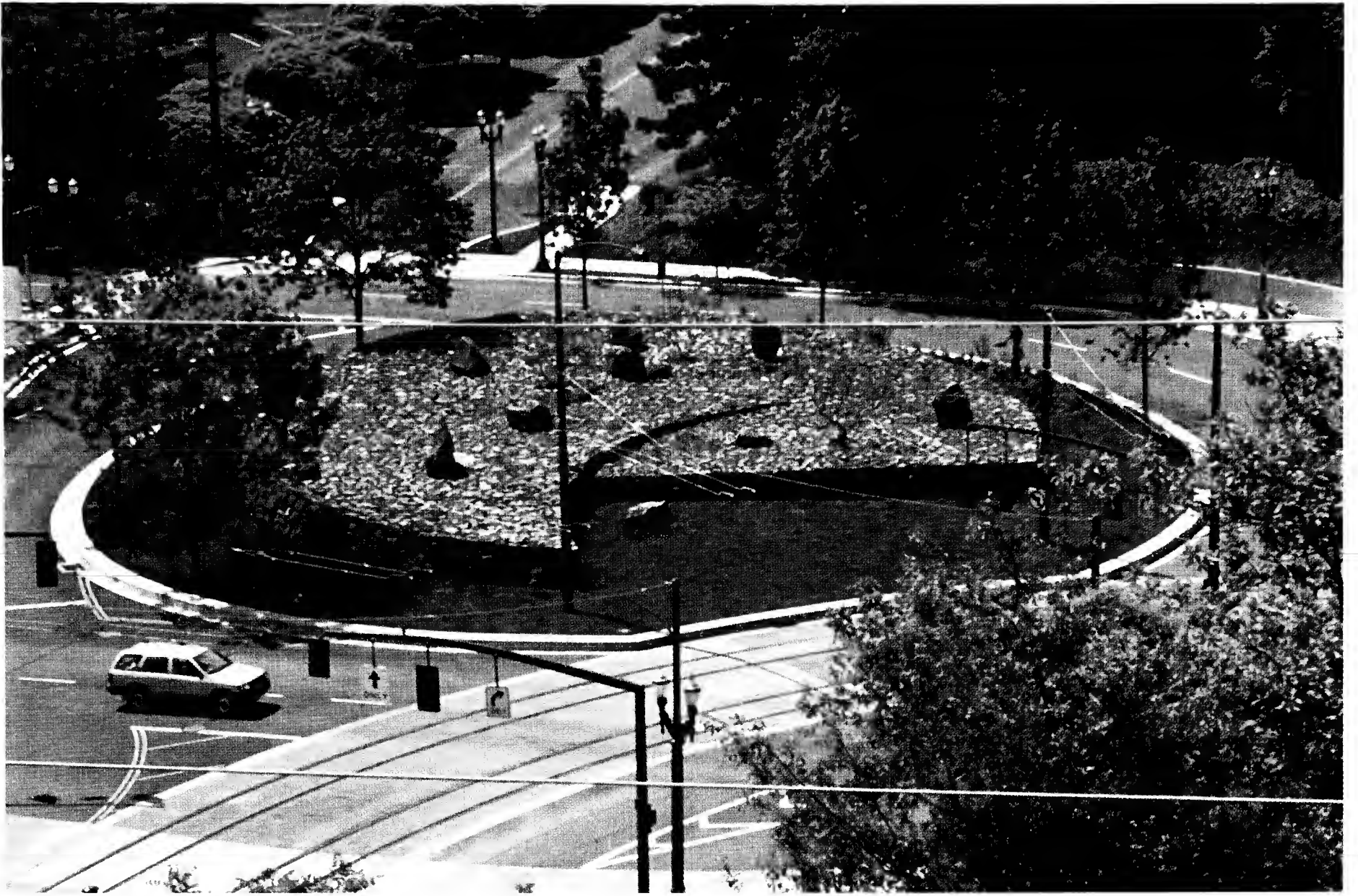
"I try to create powerful images of ancient places, combining harmonious natural landscapes with symbolic landscapes—a power that exerts feelings," he explains.

Understanding and appreciating nature, and being able to create a garden that evokes those aspects by using plants, stone, and water—all of this was a part of Murase's education and experience in Japanese garden design.

In Japanese garden design, stones are used extensively, and special meaning is attached to







placement and orientation. A rock well-placed looks like it was sited by nature, and its size, form, and texture bring about drama in the garden. Murase uses basalt and granite, much of it coming from Eastern Washington, and orchestrates each step of the design process from finding the stones to placing them.

Also in this design tradition, is the enjoyment of water features, whether they be peaceful ponds or streams tripping over stones. Water in Murase's designs creates vibrancy in the garden. The water in his Northwest landscapes comes from Northwest nature, whether it be the view of Elliott Bay, a stream running through a hall of granite, or water emerging from its source, tumbling downstream. And, although trained in Japanese garden design to use these elements, Murase has broadened his palette.

"Most people don't follow the rules of Japanese garden design, anymore," Murase says. "I design much more intuitively." Strict standards have given way to a more modern interpretation of Japanese elements. In designing the new extension for the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, for example, interiors once again will be divested of plants. A stream will be present, this time running from the inside to the outside. Northwest natives will cluster outside, as a stream emerging from rocks into the open attracts plants to it.

Basalt takes center stage at Portland's Collins Circle. "I thought about how to make the landscape evocative and mysterious, not necessarily following Japanese design rules," Murase recalls. The former small, grassy park is now part of the design for the new light-rail station. Rocks fit together with a random appearance, yet create an ever-widening circle that measures 100 feet across with an occasional standing stone.

Stones are separated by what looks like deep crevices that give the impression of the earth's upheaval, yet each one is securely mortared. The design is a safety feature that deters walkers from crossing the tracks by its imposing presence. It also is much more: a sudden, visual impact of the mass of volcanic rock. Three sumacs are the only plant life within the circle.

"It's just a mound of stone," Murase says, "but it takes its context from the vast fields of volcanic stone in Central Oregon. This imagery of Oregon, using stone native to those

volcanic beds, slopes toward the track, so that, as the train passes, passengers take in the full effect. I call it 'the One Stop Meditation Garden'." In the tradition of Japanese garden designers, he still oversees the placing of each stone in his landscapes. The circle, he says, is also reminiscent of the stone circles in western Europe, stone mounds holding the mystery of their origins and evoking powerful images of ancient places.

Robert Murase's designs are found in public and private places. At once both public and private is the Japanese-American Historical Plaza in Portland, a linear walk alongside the Willamette River, which serves as a history of the Japanese people in America. He used granite, basalt, and a row of flowering cherries to tell the story: Individual stones stacked together become a solid wall as the Japanese community is formed in America. Standing stones tell the story of internment, one in which Murase and his family were involved. Nearby, the river flows through time with the stones.

In both the classic Japanese and contemporary Northwestern traditions, Murase used recycled products for NEC America's Corporate Headquarters in Hillsboro, Oregon. The symmetry of sandstone (reclaimed from building foundations) and water are offset by rhododendrons, azaleas, and flowering cherries.

In the Nissho Iwai Garden at Portland's Nike Campus, Murase borrowed the adjacent wetlands to extend the natural area with a stream and rough-stacked stones. Paths intersect the grounds bringing runners and walkers alike to the garden where they are detained—encouraged to pause as they take in the sight of simple stone and water and reflect on nature.

"I find doing these places and evoking the mystery and symbolism to be challenging work," says Murase. Elements of the Northwest—native stone, wetlands, volcanic eruption, the collective memory of a people—these are the background for Murase's work in stone and water.

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Martha Polk Wingate is a member of the editorial board of the *Bulletin*. She has a master's degree from the Center for Urban Horticulture.

A portfolio of Robert Murase's work can be found in Michael Leccese's *Robert Murase: Stone and Water* (Washington, DC: Spacemaker Press, 1997).





## The Garden as Metaphor

BY VALERIE EASTON

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TERRY WELCH

**I**t may be surprising to say that Terry Welch's genius for carving a Japanese-inspired garden out of the Cascade foothills originated when he was 19, from studying the British landscape tradition of Capability Brown.

Welch's love of nature came even earlier, as he grew up watching the salmon spawn along Kelsey Creek in Bellevue, before it grew into the urbanized, fourth largest city in Washington State. He later became steeped in the Japanese culture when he travelled to Japan in his early twenties, after receiving a degree in the Japanese language and cultural anthropology from the University of Washington.

"I had no idea it would be gardens that would catch me and cause me not to follow my plans to go on to law school," says Welch. "I lived next to gardens in Kyoto and I was just undone." He came back home, worked as a landscape gardener, and started to look for land. "What we found was a clearcut, much abused piece of wetland," explains Terry. A great blue heron rose from the pond as he and his father walked the property for the first time, and they bought thirty acres.

Welch has used the Japanese traditions of landscape design to take a denigrated clearcut wetland and create a much finer habitat than existed there before. "The center of my work is the adoration of nature," Welch explains, "and that is just what happens to be at the center of Japanese aesthetics—





in gardens, art, and daily living."

Today, five distinct gardens are set into the gently slanting landscape. Aesthetically brilliant, subtly skillful references to Japanese gardening principles abound, but the real glory of the place lies in Welch's fulfillment of Capability Brown's 18<sup>th</sup> century idea of coaxing the essence out of the site, of working gently to get to the truth of the place.

Other inspirations for Welch included such Northwest destinations as Butchart Gardens, Kubota Gardens, and Oehme Gardens outside of Wenatchee. "Works of art were created out of three hopeless pieces of land," says Welch.

"As with Japanese teahouse gardens, I loved the fantasy of it." His own moon-viewing pavilion, reached by following stepping stones along the bank of a pond, rests within this tradition of fantasy. Ducks slide along the water's edge, up to the intricately ornamented pavilion carved in Java, complete with reclining chaise on which to rest while awaiting moonrise over the pond.

A short walk up a hillside from the ponds is one of the largest Zen gardens outside of Japan.



It seems curiously at home amidst the contoured grassy slopes of the garden. This may be in part because the garden's rock formations have been laid out to represent the Cascades, Olympics, and Puget Sound. Or perhaps its rightness stems from its being a Northwest adaptation of a Zen garden—walled on two sides, in contrast to the fully enclosed gardens of Japan. Welch has left it open so that animals can leave their prints, too, in the raked patterns of the white gravel. A deer had recently passed through on the afternoon I visited, and Welch tells of a turtle that sought out the gravel's comforting warmth. Welch makes curving patterns with a rake in the gravel to represent his own life, as in the Japanese tradition.

"Our life has no meaning but our passing through it," Welch explains. Here his own tracks mingle with those of the animals that seek out the tranquility and safe haven he has created amidst the relentless, escalating development surrounding his property.

As Welch walked me around the gardens, I was lulled by the late September sunshine, the dance of the mating dragonflies, and the primeval majesty of the great blue heron taking wing off the pond. I was intrigued by the shadows of beaver, bear, swallow, deer, and otter that linger around the margins of the ponds and the edges of the woodlands. Welch explained to me how the Snoqualmie tribe had inhabited this land, and that the more he learns about them, the more he understands that they held land sacred in the same ways as do the Japanese.

Terry Welch speaks in eloquent metaphors, which he has been able to translate into the forms of trees, water, grassy slopes, and stone. I wonder aloud how such distinctly Japanese styles as Zen gardens and teahouses can seamlessly slip into a naturalistic Northwest landscape.

Welch explains how he has transformed the idea of Japanese polarity into landscape forms, by designing an austere upper half of the garden (the Zen garden, where, he says, "All life has been sucked out"), in contrast with the lower half of the garden, which is infused with the life force—trees, grass, ponds. Where the two meet is a point of balance where one can find a state of grace.

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Freelance writer Valerie Easton is library manager at the Elisabeth C. Miller Library, University of Washington Center for Urban Horticulture. Valerie is a long-time member of the *Bulletin* editorial board.



## The Christmas Pool Bridge *at* Bloedel Reserve

PHOTOS & TEXT BY RICHARD A. BROWN

Prentice Bloedel, creator of the Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island, was intimately involved with the creation of the Japanese Garden at the Washington Park Arboretum. Through that project, he met with Fujitaro Kubota, who ultimately designed and constructed the small Japanese garden for the Bloedels in 1961.

In 1986, the Asian theme of the Bloedel Reserve was expanded upon with the addition of the Stone Garden designed by the late Dr. Koichi Kawana. Some even believe that the Reserve's Moss Garden, started in 1980, reflects strong Asian influences. These are just some of the features within the Reserve that obviously reflect Japanese design qualities, modified by western motives.

Another small space at Bloedel Reserve also suggests a Japanese flavor, but perhaps not so clearly. It was referred to as the Christmas Pool, for Christmas 1970 when Mr. Bloedel surprised his wife Virginia with it as a present.

Northwestern design features predominate in this area through the use of azaleas, rhododendrons, and colorful perennials, all arranged within a backdrop of native trees. The small garden, located in the northeast corner of the property, surrounds the little pool, which is located downstream from a



waterfall. Nearby is the new Birch Grove, planted solely with white-barked specimens of *Betula jacquemontii* that stand out in the landscape.

The Christmas Pool garden is a small space with vague boundaries. The pool's surrounding banks host azaleas, rhododendrons, iris, primroses, hosta, and ferns. Adjacent to the pool is the access path that winds around two sides of the pool and passes over a small footbridge before continuing up the slope through the Glen Woods. The footbridge spans the stream that supplies all the water to the pool, and the banks of that stream host hundreds of pink candelabra primroses (*Primula pulverulenta*). Strategically placed off-center in the pond is a large stone shaped like and referred to as "Turtle Rock." On the outflow end of the pool is a small waterfall, which accommodates one last glimpse of the water before it snakes its way down the fern-filled ravine to the beach on Puget Sound.

Like many features of the Reserve, this garden evolved to its present form via several independent developmental efforts. These efforts were refinements implemented to respond to changing needs—larger audiences, public safety concerns, and a clearer image of our overall mission.

One of the first refinements dealt with the footbridge. When the pond was first installed, it had a small arched bridge placed over the inlet stream. Unfortunately the contractor who built and installed the feature misunderstood Mr. Bloedel's directions and set the concrete footings too high. When the bridge was set on top of these footings, the top of the arch was significantly higher above the water than Mr. Bloedel felt a bridge of such size should be.

As the Reserve evolved and experienced more and more visitors, it also became apparent that this footbridge was too narrow and lacked any kind of railings, therefore appearing to be somewhat hazardous. The issue of safety was addressed by Mr. Bloedel, who personally designed a replacement bridge in 1981.

His new bridge clearly reflects Japanese design elements. Underneath its flat deck, extending away from the footings, are supporting braces that are carefully shaped in a manner typical of a Japanese design. Mr. Bloedel also designed the low railing for the bridge, relying upon his library of books on Japanese garden design for inspiration. Built by Kaz Ishumitsu of Bellevue, of vertical-grain clear

redwood, these railings are simple, strong, and very Asian. To finish the railings off, turned "acorn"-style finials rest atop each post supporting the rails.

It would be natural, in a Northwest garden, to have the trail exit the ends of the footbridge in smooth, natural curves. Because of the narrowness of the space holding the stream, pool, footbridge, and trail, as the trail exits the north end of the bridge it is treated as it might be in a Japanese garden. Instead of curving away in a gentle sweep from the end of the bridge, this trail makes an abrupt turn to the left. It is as though the bridge intersects the trail passing by its end. Since the bridge fails to perform a logical terminus to the trail, a large stone was set at the very end of the path. A pedestrian walking down this trail towards the bridge would soon see this stone and be diverted by it onto the bridge.

As several of the Reserve landscape features, such as the Christmas Pool garden, evolved during the 1970s, so did the clarity of our mission. Two themes emerged during this period that were integrated into our mission statement, but have similar expressions within Zen traditions. Those are that: (1) man should be a responsible steward of his environment, and (2) the Reserve landscape should be developed in such a way so as to capitalize on its potential to inspire and refresh the human spirit.

Prentice Bloedel undoubtedly found comfort in and was influenced by his readings and conversations about Japanese garden traditions. Two Zen themes seemed to be especially important. One is that man exists as a harmonious part of nature, not separate from it. The other is that people need daily contact with nature for their general well-being. Mr. Bloedel set forth these ideas in the "Statement of Purpose" that was adopted by the trustees in the summer of 1976. Today, these precepts, rooted in Japanese philosophy, help guide the Bloedel Reserve.

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Richard A. Brown is Executive Director of the Bloedel Reserve.

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- Bloedel, P. "Statement of Nature and Purpose of the Bloedel Reserve." Adopted by the Arbor Fund, June 1976.



*Japanese black pine, *Pinus thunbergii*, prevails in a Kubota landscape near Seattle University's library.*

## Kubota's Living Legacy *at* Seattle University

PHOTO AND TEXT BY JAMES "CISCOE" MORRIS

**W**hen you walk onto the Seattle University campus, east of Seattle's downtown business district, you may sense that something is different about the landscape. It is hard to put your finger on what it is: something subtle, calming—a feeling of being in nature.

Perhaps it is the beautiful pine trees that are pruned into fluid shapes that contrast with natural designs of solid stone. Maybe it is the rugged boulders exerting a sense of strength and power; they are laid out asymmetrically, to suggest the wildness of nature.

Possibly it is the trees: Majestic blue atlas, deodora, and incense cedars and giant sequoias tower high above tall buildings. Or is it the serpentine weeping sequoia (fondly named snufflepegus by the students) that winds its way around giant rock formations and wizened shrubs? It could be the ancient-looking Japanese maples. When their twisted branches are covered in fall color, they contrast with the solid, weighty stones and recall changing seasons and cycles of life.

In a far corner of the campus, a quiet waterfall splashes down from a mountain scene to a lovely pond. A row of gold finches takes advantage of the solitude to shower in the mist.

Soon a common thread can be discerned—a quiet natural beauty that ties the landscape together. The influence of Japanese design is here, but it is more than that: This is the legacy of Fujitaro Kubota and his sons, Tommy and Tak.



The Kubotas did most of their work at Seattle University in the 1950s and 1960s. During that time, they transformed it from a barren campus lacking any semblance of unity, to a place now recognized as one of the most beautiful landscapes in the Pacific Northwest.

It all started when the ground supervisor at the time, Father Nichols (also known as Father Greengrass ) realized that the best way to unify the campus was to develop an attractive landscape. Nichols picked Kubota because of his unique gardening style. It had a Japanese theme, but the elements were used in a freer way that conveyed a feeling of nature and fit better with a university setting.

The Kubotas were famous for being able to move bigger trees than almost anyone else at the time. Most of the large old trees that grace the campus gardens were saved from destruction from various West Coast construction projects, dug up, and brought directly to campus. Some of these trees were close to 60 feet tall. They now are responsible for the unified, mature look of the campus gardens today.

Of course, to many, the most beautiful trees on the Seattle University campus are Japanese pines that inhabit many of the attractive rock formations. Kubota collected seed from some of the most famous pines in Japan and brought it in his pocket when he came to the United States as a young man in 1906. Most of the black and red Japanese pines growing at Seattle University today were sowed from those seeds.

When walking through the Seattle University campus, the impressive granite and basalt rocks are particularly noticeable. Kubota hand-picked most of these rocks from the Cascade Mountains. He then integrated them in his landscapes in an artistic, yet natural, setting.

Sadly, some of Kubota's artistry has been moved or destroyed to make way for new buildings and other changes necessary to an urban campus. But many at the University and in the community recognize the value of the Kubota landscapes, and efforts are underway to preserve various remaining gems. Hopefully these efforts will succeed, and the quiet elegance of Kubota's legacy will continue to grace the campus landscape for years to come.

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James "Ciscoe" Morris is Seattle University's horticulturist. Ciscoe hosts a garden show each Sunday morning on KIRO AM radio. He is an editorial board member of the *Bulletin*.

## Washington Park Arboretum's Japanese Garden—

*at*

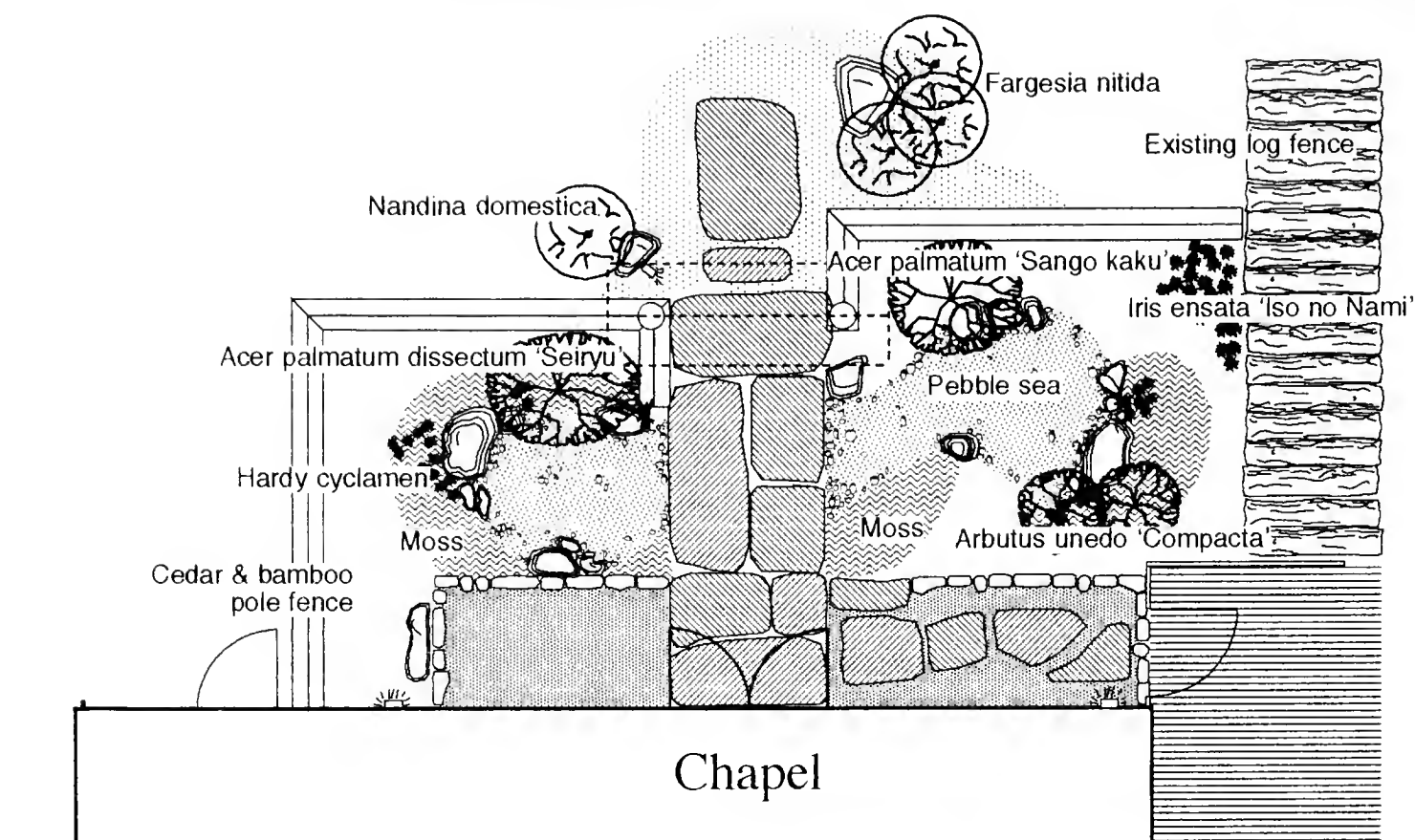
Madison Street &  
Lake Washington Blvd. East,  
Seattle



Enjoy the plants,  
admire the full moon.  
In the distance, is a teahouse.

See it recreated in the  
Arboretum Foundation  
Display at

The Northwest  
Flower & Garden  
Show  
February 4—8  
Washington State  
Convention Center



Courtesy of Private Gardens

## Tsuboniwa for a Catholic Monastery

BY SUSAN HARRISON

During the winter of 1996 to 1997, I accepted an intriguing commission: Design a Japanese-influenced entry courtyard (tsuboniwa) for a Benedictine monastery chapel in the San Juan Islands. The site has a history of Japanese influence, and the monastic community was enthusiastic about the idea of a tsuboniwa at the entrance to their new chapel.

Thinking of the desires and culture of those who would live with the garden, I pondered the relationship between a Western religious order and an Eastern garden-making philosophy and found a certain compatibility. The nuns' lifestyle of ritual and working with the land dovetailed with traditions surrounding the tea ceremony and other precedents incorporated in the tsuboniwa. I saw no cultural conflict and, most importantly, neither did they. I began to search for associations that would unite their needs with the inherent qualities of the site.

To their great credit, members of the monastic community were able to let go of some of their ideas about Japanese gardens. They were able to learn what I have learned and help me find the meaning of the site and fit it to their needs. We put together the beginnings of a space that, with time and care, will show its roots in the principles and traditions of Japanese garden-making as well as its essential Northwest spirit.

Big stone slabs for the pathway came from the mainland, and edging stones and smaller infill stones were gathered at the site. The heavy fence frame is made of native cedar from the island, and its little roof is covered with tiles used in previous construction at the monastery. Bamboo fence panels built of poles from Asia make a connection with Japanese traditions as they exist in the minds of the garden users.

Other elements link traditional and site-specific influences: A coral-bark maple inside and a clump of bamboo outside the gate harmonize with the fence panels. Moss was brought from an abundant source near the chapel and used to cover dwarf hills surrounding a metaphorical pebble sea. Strawberry bush (*Arbutus unedo* 'Compacta') performs its magic under the spreading arms of its native cousins standing nearby.

As a garden-maker who has begun the long process of learning the language of the Japanese garden, I am excited when I see the possibilities for using its vocabulary and syntax to move through and beyond its traditions. Perhaps it is a way to create gardens that are thoroughly, originally our own.

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Susan Harrison's Bellingham company, Private Gardens, designs and builds gardens in northwestern Washington.



# On the Go Visit Gardens Touched by Japan

BY STEPHANIE FEENEY

**T**he Pacific Northwest is located geographically between England and Japan, with a climate sympathetic to each of these distant lands and historical ties that have intermingled the cultures of the Japanese and British with our own. Sometimes, the Northwesterner's use of Japanese garden elements is filtered through both of these foreign cultures.

The act of passing through the ceremonial gate of a Japanese Garden is to enter another world, one of peaceful contemplation that leaves the world of strife and care behind. It is possible to meander through a Japanese garden and enjoy it purely at face value. Yet coming to understand the metaphorical use of the garden's elements and the philosophy behind such a garden's creation and maintenance is to see with new eyes, to experience with a deeper spirit. From this awareness comes insight into what it is that creates an atmosphere of reverence for nature and feelings of personal well-being.

Those of us who have grown up in a Western culture may never truly assimilate the metaphysical beliefs that guide the Japanese through their lives. We can, however, learn a great deal about garden-making principles and incorporate them into our own gardens, in hopes of evoking a sense of the Japanese.

Many Northwest gardeners have an innate affinity for the elements that represent the Japanese garden style. Drawn to seek inspiration from our spectacular natural environment of forest, mountains, and sea, we can sense the spiritual connotations in the Japanese use of water, stone, rock, and plants. This region affords a number of excellent opportunities to visit Japanese gardens, become involved in their support organizations, patronize lectures, and attend events offered to provide insight into Japanese culture and garden design.

## Traditional Japanese Gardens

**Portland Japanese Garden:** 611 SW Kingston Ave., Portland, OR; (503) 223-4070. April-May, 10 am-6 pm; June-August, 9 am-8 pm;

October-March, 10 am-4 pm. Entry fee. Read *Human Nature, the Japanese Garden of Portland, Oregon*, by Bruce Taylor Hamilton (150 pages, 150 color photographs, map). Japanese Garden Society of Oregon, PO Box 3837, Portland, OR 97208. Portland has one of the country's most highly respected Japanese gardens, designed by distinguished Japanese landscape architect Takuma Tono and completed in 1967. The garden incorporates a number of traditional styles while effectively utilizing the hilly, wooded site. Entry is through a magnificent gate of the Daimyo Period. Five traditional gardens are set on 5 acres, impeccably maintained in every season. Footpaths wind their way from one area to the next, with opportunities to stop, reflect, and relax throughout.

The structural elements of gates and fences; the traditional tea house, bridges and huts; and the granite stepping stones and hand-carved stone lanterns are all masterpieces of craftsmanship. It is interesting to note that much in this garden has been recycled from elsewhere in Portland—from exquisite plants rescued from the path of progress to granite in need of a new home. The Japanese Garden Society of Portland sponsors many events through the year that provide insight into Japanese culture and the elements of design utilized in an authentic Japanese garden style.

**The Japanese Garden, Washington Park Arboretum:** Lake Washington Blvd. E. (north of East Madison St.), Seattle, WA; (206) 684-7050 (Seattle Dept. of Parks), 684-4725 (cashier's booth). March 1-November 30, daily, 10 am; closing time varies by season. Entry fee.

This 3-acre stroll garden is based on designs popular in the Matojabe period of 1693-1730. The meandering paths alternate between views of intimate garden scenes and open vistas, transforming even a relatively small site into the appearance of a larger garden. Traditional elements of beautifully maintained trees, shrubs, and vines are among carefully selected and placed stones, water elements, stone lanterns, and carved granite basins. As you would expect,

spring and fall bring a splendid display of flower and foliage.

On the third Saturday of the month (from April–October), at 1:30 pm, you are invited to participate in a free demonstration of Chado, the Way of Tea, in the authentic Shoseian Teahouse.

**Nitobe Memorial Garden:** On the campus of University of British Columbia across NW Marine Dr. from the Museum of Anthropology Gatehouse, Vancouver, British Columbia; (604) 822-6038. Fee charged, except from mid-March to mid-October (at which time it is open weekdays only).

Nitobe's informal Stroll and Tea Garden was created in 1960 in memory of Japanese educator, scholar, publicist, and diplomat Dr. Inazo Nitobe, noted for his role in interpreting the ways of Japan and the West to one another. A 2.4-acre island of serenity provides insight into the symbolic nature of a classic Japanese garden.

Native plants share the garden with those imported from Japan, and each of 12 stone lanterns is unique. Traditional ceremonies are conducted in the Teahouse.

## Japanese Gardens, Northwest Influence

**Bainbridge Public Library Interpretive Garden:** 1270 Madison Ave. N., Bainbridge Island, WA; (206) 842-4162. Installed in 1997, this public garden was a gift from Bainbridge Island's Japanese-American Community and is located near the entrance to the City of Winslow's library. Designed by the owner of Bainbridge Gardens, Junkoh Harui, the garden includes traditional elements of Japanese gardens and some that are a fitting blend of Japanese-influenced American touches. A distinctive joining of cultures is represented by the many stone plaques placed along the garden path; they are etched with traditional haiku celebrating the poetry of the natural world.

**Bloedel Reserve:** 7571 NE Dolphin Dr., Bainbridge Island, WA; (206) 842-7631. Reservations required. Fee. From the time Prentice and Virginia Bloedel acquired this 150-acre property in 1951, they employed a sensitive touch in marrying the designing hand of man with the natural attributes of the woodland setting. The major development occurred over a period of 30 years, with the commissioned partnerships of wisely selected professionals, such

as Fujitaro Kubota, who helped with the Japanese Garden. Prentice Bloedel orchestrated the development of many garden rooms set in the varied landscape of second-growth hardwood and conifers, meadow and wetlands, glens and gullies. While incorporating the traditions of the Japanese and European gardening influences, a respect for the natural attributes of the land prevailed. The lush woodland Moss Garden opens onto the Reflection Pool, a startling juxtaposition of the soft, wild, and almost brooding elements of the former with the strict formality and reverent aura of the latter.

**Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH),** University of Washington: 3501 NE 41<sup>st</sup> St., Seattle, WA; (206) 685-8033. Free. Open daily from dawn until dusk. The Seattle Garden Club Entry Court to the CUH campus creates a botanical foyer displaying an enviable groundcover garden in shade, under a canopy of stripe-bark maples. It leads into the McVay Courtyard, which is snugly surrounded within the protective architectural arms of this horticultural haven. The courtyard harbors drifts of ornamental grasses and plants with grass-like foliage, vines, small shrubs, and trees. Visit especially for the marvelous use of the hardscape—stones, pavers, and cleverly worked paths among the undulating raised beds. They seem to invite you to sit and meditate as though on the bank of a gently flowing stream and to take in the careful detailing of plant combinations. A corner niche features a stately stand of black bamboo, which rustles soothingly in any breeze.

**The Chase Garden:** For information, send SASE to PO Box 98553, Des Moines, WA 98198. Tours are by appointment only, April and May. When Emmett and Ione Chase met with Tacoma landscape architect Rex Zumwalt in 1962, they requested a design for their 4.5-acre site that suggested the simplicity of a Japanese garden. Over the years, the Chases have developed the garden, keeping in mind Ione's belief that the act of gardening is to create beauty in natural surroundings. They have established a carefully groomed woodland of second-growth native trees carpeted with an under story of trillium, vanilla leaf, and other wildflowers. Two small reflecting pools near the house are surrounded by raked pea gravel, contributing to the effect of a Japanese garden. Pathways go through drifts of colorful ground covers in a meadow reminiscent of an alpine setting. An open vista of



forested foothills overlooking the Puyallup River Valley borrows a very impressive view of Mount Rainier. This is Washington State's first project of the Garden Conservancy, which is a national non-profit organization.

**Kubota Gardens:** Renton Avenue S. and 55<sup>th</sup> Ave. S., Seattle; WA; (206) 684-4584. Open daily dawn to dusk. Free. The garden began life in the 1920s as the hobby of Fujitaro Kubota. As Kubota's landscape design business grew, he used the garden as a working-nursery to demonstrate the blending of traditional Japanese garden concepts with native Northwest plants.

This stunning 20-acre setting of hills and valleys is crisscrossed with streams, waterfalls, ponds, rock outcroppings, and a marvelously rich and complex collection of specimen plants. Traditional details of Japanese garden design are found throughout, such as the brilliant red Moon Bridge and statuesque Kasuga-style stone lantern. See an extraordinary 32-foot-long weeping blue Atlas cedar and a 37-foot-tall weeping Norway spruce, a forest of threadleaf cypress, and a grove of yellow-groove and black-groove bamboo. The garden has been owned by the City of Seattle since 1987 and is designated as a Seattle Historic Landmark.

**Yao Garden, Bellevue Botanical Garden:** 12001 Main St., Bellevue, WA; (425) 452-2750. Open dawn to dusk. Free. Named for Bellevue's sister city in Japan, the Yao Garden is part of the Eastern Garden sequence. Basalt quarried in Oregon and personally selected by the architect was imported to form the foundation. Of particular note is the finely crafted double gate with beautiful copper adornment at its peak. Within the garden, the use of traditional Japa-

nese maples, bamboo, hostas, nandina, and moss is augmented by the use of Northwest natives and a variety of other plants. A stream tumbles into the pond which forms a central feature around which the garden path revolves.

## Resources and Organizations

The Japanese Garden Society: 10505 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98145; (425) 641-7145.

The Japanese Garden Society of Oregon: PO Box 3837, Portland, OR 97208; (503) 223-4070.

Bloedel Reserve: 7571 NE Dolphin Dr., Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-1097; (206) 842-7631.

Bellevue Botanical Garden Society, PO BOX 40536, Bellevue, WA 98015; (425) 452-2750.

Kubota Garden Foundation: PO Box 12646, Seattle, WA 98111-4646; (206) 725-5060.

Also active in this region are organizations specializing in bamboo, bonsai, koi, the Japanese Tea ceremony, rhododendrons, ferns, hostas, iris, native plants, and conifers. For information, contact the Elisabeth C. Miller Horticultural Library, Seattle; (206) 543-8616.

The Washington Park Arboretum has an exceptional collection of Japanese maples, rhododendrons and azaleas, conifers, and other trees and shrubs commonly used in Japanese gardens. Here you can find them identified. Members may request that the Pat Calvert Greenhouse volunteers propagate plants from the Arboretum collection for you.

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Stephanie Feeney is the author of *Northwest Gardeners' Resource Directory*. Her book, *Gardeners on the Go: Seattle*, will be published in April. Reach her at 59 Strawberry Pt., Bellingham, WA 98226 (publisher@cedarcroft-press.com). Stephanie is a member of the *Bulletin's* editorial board.

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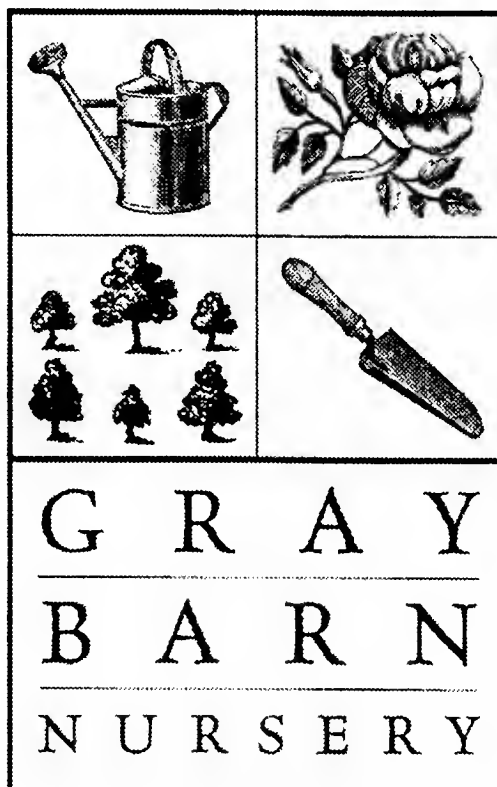
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